

**REINVENTING REVOLUTION:
VALUE AND DIFFERENCE IN NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE LEFT**

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Declaration.

The work described in this thesis is the authors own, except where otherwise indicated, and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another degree at this or any other university.

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Abstract.

The problems of post-nineteen sixties left-wing politics are explored by analysing a hypothetical collective memory of the left. This memory claims that the hegemony over thought and practice held by Marxism has been broken down since the nineteen sixties by many different non-class based forms of oppression.

The nature of Marxism as one political movement among other such movements is then explored and implications for any movement that tries to base itself on unified and universal values are outlined. It is argued that any politics based on unified values will create oppression because the values of such a politics will exclude the values of some other group.

The possibility that politics can be based on difference is then explored. The works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and Jean-Francois Lyotard are examined as examples of difference based political theories. It is then concluded that, in general, difference is an inadequate basis for liberatory politics because difference based politics is only concerned to protect the process of differentiation and so ignores the particular values on which anti-oppression movements have been based.

The possibility that difference and value based theories and movements are actually part of the one debate and do not follow each other in a linear progression is then analysed. The difference/value debate is characterised as consisting of paralysed motion because both difference and value have important critiques of each other and answers to those critiques, thereby creating a constant motion between the two poles of difference and value which yet never moves beyond these two poles.

A general understanding of emancipatory politics is then proposed, called the ontology of emancipatory collectives, which is not enmeshed in the difference/value debate. It is argued that different fundamental transformations of society can be carried out by many different emancipatory collectives. Emancipatory collectives are defined as collective action systems that are unified by a common experience of oppression or project of emancipation. A general definition of oppression and emancipation is proposed as well as a definition of the process by which collectives are unified. It is also argued that emancipatory collectives relate to each other according to a framework which has the two poles of misunderstanding and assimilation. Finally, the general vision of politics which arises from the ontology of emancipatory collectives is outlined and its two underlying principles, of perspectivism and contextualism, are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1: MEMORY AND THE LEFT.

The Left.

"This book should be taken as a strictly *theoretical* endeavour. Theoretical, in that none of the questions it poses can be said to have been answered definitively or for all time...In fact, the book proposes more questions than it will answer. The only questions it will properly move to answer have, I think, been answered already within the patterns of...life. We need only give these patterns serious scrutiny and draw certain permissible conclusions."
Amiri Baraka [Jones, 1963, 1]

For people attempting to change the nature of their society a memory of their struggle performs several functions. In one respect, a memory reminds activists of how they came to the position they are in and so ensures they will not repeat mistakes; in another, by remembering a time when society was different, a memory tells activists that change is possible. A memory of political struggle is a base from which future activism can proceed and so, ostensibly about the past, it can act in the present and affect the future.

Two entities are implied by these observations; a collective memory and a community of activists that holds such a memory. Both of these entities are abstractions which might be built from the material reality of political activism because this reality exists in individuals, texts and events rather than in concepts like memory or community. No activist has ever

encountered 'the left' but all left-wing activists have encountered members of Trotskyist Parties or the texts of Marx. Accordingly, 'memory' and 'community' can be understood as reifications of the really existing networks of political activism.

A vision of political change can be expressed through reifications such as 'collective memory' or 'community of activists' because these concepts generalise the experiences and beliefs of activists. Such a vision will allow individuals caught in particular networks to raise their heads and have a sense of their place in an overall struggle. The reality of left-wing activism may be reading an article on production, volunteering for flyposting or marching in demonstrations but these actions all gain a general meaning through reifications which articulate a vision of political change.

These observations imply that the work of political activists must relate with some consistency to the reifications they endorse, because the meaning of their actions are partially derived from and partially legitimated by these reifications. Similarly, if particular events heavily contradict a reification then an adjustment may be needed in the overall political vision. Political activism can thus be understood on two inter-related levels, the general and the particular or the reified and the material, and questions can be posed

about the general level because of its effects on activism.

Exploration of such questions also seems urgent for left-wing activism, for political change since the nineteen-sixties has been dislocating for leftists. [Hall, 1988: Laclau and Mouffe, 1985] For example, the left's focus has shifted from criticising the state to defending sections of it, from a worker based radicalism to a recognition of the decline of the working class and its institutions and from the ideal of a single movement for a better world to numerous movements each based on a particular identity. Amid these difficulties have also come constant calls for a renewal of the left, none of which seem to produce the resurrection of a unified overarching movement. [Guattari and Negri, 1985: Weir and Wilson, 1984] The general collapse of communism, both East and West, comes into this story not so much as a crisis for the left but as another moment in a general dislocation that has been in progress since the nineteen-sixties.

The dislocation of the left does not, however, extend to particular events or conflicts, as there have been important political and social struggles relevant to the left from the sixties to the present. *SOS-Racisme* in France and the Anti-Poll Tax campaigns in the U.K. are examples of powerful struggles that appear to be

consistent with the left but which are also not necessarily subsumed within the left. Another example of such ambiguity is animal liberation struggles which offer many of the signs of the left, such as grass-roots organising and a concern for oppression and its human sources, but which somehow do not easily fit with left-wing priorities for human emancipation. The left's problems lie not in left-wing struggles ceasing to exist but in the nature of the 'left' that relates to political struggles. What has become dislocated is the overall vision of political change that the left embodies, not the fact of ongoing political struggle.

It is therefore the general political vision of the left which needs analysis because, however dynamic the realm of activists, texts and theories might be, what unifies sections of this realm as 'the left' seems fragmented and uncertain. Accordingly, this thesis will try to both analyse difficulties in the general vision of the left and to advance a theory which addresses the difficulties that are revealed. Initially, this proposal creates a methodological problem because identifying the overall political vision of the left is difficult, partly because different segments of left activism may have different visions and partly because it is difficult not to assume the vision in advance of its analysis.

It is clear that visions of the left differ between movements and theories. The obvious method for studying this diversity would be to develop an empirical summary which outlines the common ground of all identifiable left visions. However, such a method would involve assuming a criteria for what can and cannot be included as left in advance of investigating the left. Further, as has already been noted, the left is not a real objective body which empirical techniques can identify but is an imaginary construct which refers to real bodies. It may again be asked who has ever met the left, as opposed to the texts of Marx or members of a demonstration. As it is this imaginary that is fragmented, and so is under discussion, empiricism provides a problematic basis for analysis.¹

An alternative to the empirical identification of the Western left, that will be employed in this thesis, would be to propose a version of the left's collective memory, as an aspect of the left's overall vision, and then to analyse this memory. In this way the left can be made the direct object of investigation and instances of left-wing activism can be examined, even though an empirically

1 Another objection to basing an analysis of the left on the empirical identification of the left's history is that the material accuracy of that history, or memory, is a site of struggle in itself. That is, whatever makes up the 'material' basis of the left's memory is itself ordered by the conceptions of that memory and is not independent of those conceptions. Accordingly, the nature of the left or its history cannot be expected to be defined by purely empirical means.

authoritative version of the left will not be asserted. A danger of this method is that ideas thrown up by it will appear decontextualised because the memory will simply be hypothesised and not empirically grounded. It may thus appear as if ideas are all that matters, not why certain ideas have become important to the left at certain times.

To fully answer this criticism would clearly require turning back to empirical techniques, which is an approach that has already been rejected. Instead, the proposed method can be defended against the accusation of decontextualism by noting that its employment will mark this thesis as essentially a theoretical work, in the sense offered by Baraka in this chapter's epigraph.

Reinventing Revolution is not a sociology or a history of the left but is an exploration of the left's political philosophy. This does not mean that practices of the left are ignored but rather that this thesis analyses ideas about both theories and actions. Reinventing Revolution is a theoretical work, but its theory concerns both practices and ideas of the left.

Ultimately, the relevance of the following philosophical exploration to left activism will result from the relevance of the hypothesised collective memory. As has been argued, the memory does not have to be completely realistic or historically precise, however it must grasp some features of the post-sixties left in order to give

relevance to subsequent analysis. If the hypothesised memory is appropriate then the analysis which follows it will come to grips with the left's vision and will develop both criticism of it and an alternative to it, despite the fact that the hypothesis cannot encapsulate all possible manifestations of the left. The memory is not the actual body of the left, whose entrails need to be examined, but a scalpel for opening up that body to analysis.

The Left's Collective Memory.

A collective memory for the left will be articulated by drawing out two common threads from African-American activist Amiri Baraka's autobiography, The Autobiography of Leroi Jones, Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright's late nineteen-seventies analysis of the relationship between socialism and feminism, Beyond the Fragments, and Paul Gilroy's late nineteen-eighties investigation of the relationship between race, class and nationalism in the U.K., There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack. The memory can first be glimpsed in an event in New York in the early nineteen sixties recounted by Baraka.

"All I knew is that the Socialist Workers Party[SWP] wanted to put a woman named Berta Greene on the MDC

[Monroe Defence Committee²] and Richard Gibson was always complaining about the SWP, and, particularly, Berta Greene, as interfering obstructionists to the work he was trying to do with Fair Play [for Cuba Committee]. We met one day at my house on 14th Street. Calvin, Virginia Hamilton, Archie and some others, and SWP people gave us a check for a couple of hundred dollars and wanted to talk about Berta's being an officer on the committee. We went into secret caucus and subsequently told them we didn't want Berta on the committee. So SWP took their check back. What was so wild was that some of us were talking about how we didn't want white people on the committee but we were all hooked up to white women and the downtown Village [predominantly white] society. Such were the contradictions of that period of political organization." [Baraka, 1984. Brackets added.]

The most obvious theme in Baraka's anecdote is the exchange between the Socialist Workers Party and the Monroe Defence Committee. The exchange is very simple because the SWP, which can be viewed as a symbol of over fifty years of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice, uses money in an attempt to gain influence on the MDC, which can be viewed as a symbol of activist groups which defined themselves through a non-class based oppression.

"Somehow there has passed into Trotskyism...the assumption that the manipulation of people is justified by the supposedly superior knowledge which the leaders of revolutionary groups presume to possess of the end they believe they are pursuing." [Rowbotham, 1979, 28]

Sheila Rowbotham was writing about the experiences of British feminists but she also, inadvertently,

2 The Monroe Defence committee was set up 'to raise money and put out propaganda' about the U.S.A. government's attempt to frame black activist Rob Williams.

interpreted Baraka's anecdote. Identified by both Baraka and Rowbotham is a certain arrogance and self-belief that characterises Trotskyist organization. Gilroy also notes this certainty in relation to the politics of black liberation in the U.K..

"It is important to recognize the difficulties which attend the concept [of class] and to appreciate that its use in the politics and history of Britain's black settlers has often been economistic and reductive, seeking to subordinate the self-organization of blacks to the mythical discipline of a unified working class and its representative political institutions." [Gilroy, 1987, 18]

The thread connecting Baraka, Rowbotham and Gilroy is the encounter and disillusionment with Marxism, particularly Marxist-Leninism, by those involved in political movements not based on class. These 'non-class' anti-oppression movements shifted away from determining political theories and actions by reference to class analysis and so developed new political issues and subjectivities. These new 'subjectivities' have thus had to define themselves against the class-based subject of Marxist-Leninism. Understood organisationally and personally, this meant that the initial opposition for women, black and other movements was often not men or whites, but Marxist men and Marxist whites and their organisations.

The first common thread across the three books can now be generalised as the belief that the sixties, seventies and

eighties witnessed a process of disillusionment with Marxist and particularly Marxist-Leninist theories and organizations, because they dominated left thought at the expense of movements developed from non-class based oppressions. [Gilroy, 1987, 32-35: Rowbotham, 1979, 64-65] A second common thread is offered by Baraka when he wrote:

"Certainly the idea that oppressed people practising and believing in the values of their oppressors cannot free themselves is true and unchallengeable."
[Baraka, 1984, 253]

Baraka's statement means that political movements based on class cannot lead groups whose theories and actions do not centre on class, as this would mean understanding women, black people, gays and lesbians and any other non-class defined group as oppressed only when that oppression could be related to society's class structure. For groups asserting a non-class based oppression the certainty of Marxist-Leninism that class theory defines the nature of oppression is not only inaccurate for their own experience and misdirects their political activism, but is in itself repressive. Groups struggling within oppressive social relations must accordingly define their own sense of oppression as this is the only way that they can define their own liberation. Without such self-definitions groups would be left fighting their oppression in terms defined by others and, effectively, in western countries this would mean being led by the

class-based left. For example, Gilroy notes of the black community in Britain that:

"In some struggles, workers and shopkeepers have created political solidarity in the name of 'race' and community. In others, the action of black workers may be linked in complex ways to those of the black unemployed. It has been suggested, for example, that the industrial action in which health service workers confronted the government during the autumn and winter of 1982-83 cannot be understood unless the issue of its relationship to the urban protests of summer 1981 is explained...The political activities of black workers in the health service are necessarily tied to those of their children in the streets." [Gilroy, 1987, 19-20]

To define themselves through class theory blacks would have to deny the specificity of their struggles as blacks. The denial or trivialisation of such specificities because they contradict class theory is felt as continued repression, of essentially the same type whether exerted by Marxist-Leninist groups in the name of a unified working class or the Conservative Party in the name of a unified nation.

A second common thread across the three books is therefore the belief that movements of the oppressed must define and retain their own sense of their subordination. Specific oppressions demand both movements and self-definitions relevant to that oppression and so leadership must be refused to any group which claims to understand all oppression with the one universal analysis. For many of the groups that emerged in the sixties this meant that a confrontation with Marxist-Leninism was inevitable.

The assertion of a particular oppression does not, however, mean that a movement must deny that other subordinations exist, it merely demands that one movement does not attempt to pass off its specificity as a universal political view. [Gilroy, 1987, 157-160: Wainwright, 1979, 3-4] Consequently, once a movement has defined its specificity and guarded it with specific organisations and specific theories, liberation may require working with other groups. Accordingly, at a theoretical level Marxism is not completely rejected, but is merely removed from its position of dominance and treated as one theory of one particular oppression amongst other theories of oppression. In practical terms this implies that the concepts of alliance, between anti-oppression movements, and autonomy, of anti-oppression movements from each other become key to an understanding of the left's project of liberation. Wainwright made this clear when she wrote:

"one problem is that of drawing up a common programme of political and social change, meeting the needs of all oppressed groups, and arguing for it among each group. The other problem is gathering together all the different sources of strength, uniting the social power of the community with the industrial power of those in production, and pitching this popular power against the existing state. This requires a strategy, based on the ideas and experiences of each movement, and drawing from the lessons of past struggles and from international experiences. The solutions to these problems needs more than just ad hoc contact between the different movements. Neither is the merging of the movements any solution; there are good reasons for each movement preserving its autonomy, controlling its own organization. For women, blacks, trade unionists, gays, youth, and national minorities have specific interests which may sometimes be

antagonistic to each other... The solution lies in bringing together all those involved in the different movements and campaigns who agree on a wider programme of socialist change" [Wainwright, 1979, 5-6]

There is a clear tension in Wainwright's statement between the need to assert some sort of overarching programme of socialist change, under which to unite diverse movements, and the 'common sense' of such movements maintaining their autonomy from each other. The inherent contradictions of any organisation seeking to achieve this combination of alliance and autonomy seem enormous and it is perhaps no wonder that some have rejected formal organization altogether.

"Taking on board C.L.R. James's important observation that 'there is nothing more to organize' because 'organization as we have known it is at an end' it is possible to comprehend how people can act socially and cohesively without the structures provided by formal organizations. Collective identity spoken through 'race', community and locality are, for all their spontaneity, powerful means to coordinate action and create solidarity." [Gilroy, 1987, 247]

Gilroy has not suggested an alternative overarching organization but, instead, has argued that politics can continue without such an organisation because it can be organized around whatever unites a group of people as 'oppressed'. Race, community, or locality are merely three possible bases for such anti-oppression movements.

From the two threads that have just been discussed a collective memory for the left can now be hypothesised.

It is that prior to the nineteen-sixties the major force for revolutionary social change rested on the theoretical and organisational basis of Marxism, particularly Marxist-Leninism. Since the sixties this hegemony has been broken by movements which were defined through non-class based oppressions, for example gender, race, sexuality and so on. This change did not necessarily invalidate Marxism but simply removed its dominant status and opened up left-wing politics to new and different definitions of oppression. These non-class defined movements are also based on the necessity of their own autonomy and so, in order to free themselves, must define their own sense of oppression from their own experiences. Consequently, the force for radical change which had previously been united around Marxism has become fragmented. Further, the arguments for self-definition that were formed in the struggle to establish the difference of non-class based movements from Marxism, can in turn be employed within these movements. That is, within feminism challenges can come from race, sexuality or class, or within black liberation challenges can come from feminism, sexuality, or class and so on. From one movement united around Marxism the left has become many movements each based on a particular oppression.

As already argued, whether this memory can be shown to be historically accurate or not is irrelevant to this thesis, for here the memory will be taken as a hypothesis

and what is required from a hypothesis is a 'fine capacity for discrimination'. [Lyotard, 1979, 7] This discrimination already leads to the claim that the socialist enterprise of one, united movement fighting the great struggle for a better world has fallen to pieces; as many pieces as there are forms of oppression.

Implications of the Collective Memory.

The hypothesised memory has two major implications which will be explored. First, the memory claims that Marxism was the framework for the left prior to the nineteen-sixties but has since become just one political movement amongst other left-wing movements. Two questions can be asked of this claim: can Marxism be reformulated as one anti-oppression movement amongst other such movements; and, what would such a reformulation reveal about any universal movement based on a single unified view of society. Second, the memory implies that the eruption of many different anti-oppression movements forms the new field of left-wing politics. What does this mean and what are its implications ? In particular, what consequences can be drawn from the memory's claim that these movements can interrupt each other, just as they have interrupted Marxism ?

The significance of these two sets of questions will be investigated in turn, problems that emerge from this

investigation will be identified and, finally, a theory which overcomes these problems will be outlined. A more detailed summary of this path follows.

Whether Marxism can be a particular theory devoted to analysing certain limited questions will be analysed in two phases in chapter two. First, a version of Marxist-Leninism will be contrasted with a non-Leninist Marxism in relation to both a theory of the production process and a theory of political action. The comparison will then be extended by specifying the Marxist definition of oppression, which is exploitation through the extraction of surplus-value. The second phase will be based on a brief analysis of Jean Baudrillard's objections to Marxism, which will reveal a distinction between the particular orientation of Marxism and the belief that Marxism's orientation is the only valid political orientation. In concluding the discussion of Marxism it will be noted that combining the non-Leninist Marxism with the results of analysing Baudrillard will define a Marxism that is also just one theory of oppression among other such theories.

Chapter three will then consider consequences from this analysis of Marxism for any political movement with pretensions to universality. It will be noted that the collective memory implies that any anti-oppression movement can be considered a particular movement based on

a particular unified orientation or set of values. That is, just as Marxism can be considered the theory of economic oppression, so feminism can be regarded as the movement against women's oppression and black liberation as the movement against the oppression suffered by black people. It will then be argued that any claim to political universality can be expected to be particular because there are always differences to an orientation which contradict that orientation's universality. Consequently, any political vision that is based on a unified value must include and valorise some social groups and so must simultaneously exclude some other groups. Anti-oppression movements that are based on a unified orientation or value will thus oppress some social group by excluding them. A left based on unified values faces severe difficulties.

An alternative to basing political theories and movements on unified orientations is suggested by the collective memory's positing of many different forms of oppression and the second major section of this thesis will explore the possibility of a left politics based on difference. This exploration will be conducted in three stages; an examination of the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in chapter four, an examination of the theory of Jean-Francois Lyotard in chapter five, and a consideration of problems in general for left-wing theories of difference in chapter six.

In their book Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia Deleuze and Guattari tried to develop a new theory of liberation by reformulating psychoanalytic theory and Marxism through a theory of desire as productive of difference. In A Thousand Plateaus Deleuze and Guattari then generalised their theory of productive desire beyond the constraints of either Marxism or psychoanalytic theory. Deleuze and Guattari define the production of differences as the process of creating something new and their theory accordingly assesses different politics by this standard. This means that their theory becomes indifferent to any other characteristic of a political movement but its ability to create differences. Paradoxically, a focus on difference leads to indifference to the nature of political movements. In addition, Deleuze and Guattari's definition of difference as the creation of something new leads to a functionalism because they decide whether something is new or not according to how it works in relation to the 'machine' it is part of. Functionalism and an indifference to the politics of movements, except where they promote or prevent 'newness', are the results of Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation of difference as a basis for liberation.

Coming from a disillusionment with both Marxism and theories of desire Jean-Francois Lyotard also made an attempt to develop a general vision of difference. This

vision is detailed in the trio of books, The Postmodern Condition, Just Gaming, and The Differend and the central points of all three books will be examined.

In The Postmodern Condition Lyotard argues that 'meta-narratives', which legitimate Western discourses, have broken down and as a result a multiplicity of equally legitimate language games have become possible. He then argues that the only legitimate form of politics is the protection of anyone's right to play any language game.

In Just Gaming Lyotard argues that because an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is', that is because there is no connection between positing the true nature of society and then attempting to achieve it, it is extremely difficult to legitimate any form of justice. Lyotard then argues that because of the is/ought disjunction politics is no longer rational but has moved to the realm of opinion. Finally, Lyotard argues that the only legitimate political restriction is one which prevents any politics that does not allow people to participate in language games or does not allow the 'totality of practical and reasonable beings' to exist.

In The Differend Lyotard develops a 'philosophy of phrases or sentences' which argues that the only thing which cannot be doubted is the phrase, as 'doubting-a-phrase' is itself a phrase. He then asserts that phrases

are organised according to both heterogeneous phrase regimens, which are analogous to the rules of a game, and genres of discourse, which are analogous to the strategies needed to play a game in a certain way. As regimens are heterogeneous it will be impossible to justify any one genre, and the way it links its phrases, over any other genre and so Lyotard argues that the only politics which can be restricted is one which prevents a genre linking phrases. He then claims it is philosophy's role to continually uncover such restrictions.

In criticism it will be argued that the result of Lyotard's work, in all three books, is a similar indifferentism to that found in Deleuze and Guattari. Lyotard argues that within the right to play language games, to preserve the totality of reasonable beings or to link phrases into genres of discourse there is no means of legitimating one form of politics over another and the only forms of politics that can be opposed are those that damage these rights. As with Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard places a process of making difference at the centre of his politics and so makes the prevention of differentiation the only politics that can be opposed. It will also be argued that, unlike Deleuze and Guattari's functionalism, Lyotard develops an idealist version of difference because he privileges the right of any phrase or sentence to link with any other phrase or sentence, no matter what their context.

In chapter six an analysis of theories of difference in general will complete the analysis of difference based politics. It will be argued that theories of difference necessarily come to take as their central principle the process of making difference and that this results in a political indifferentism which homogenises all different forms of politics around the promotion of differentiation. Difference theories become concerned solely with defending the right to make difference and so judge all political movements by that standard.

At this point it will be noted that the two major forms of politics implied by the left's hypothesised memory lead either to fragmentation of the left's overall vision or indifference to the nature of political movements. It will then be pointed out that neither value nor difference exist in isolation from each other but in fact constantly criticise each other. Value-based politics are challenged by a range of different political movements and difference-based politics fail to encapsulate the particular values of movements. Accordingly, the third major section of this thesis will pursue the possibility of a left based on neither value nor difference. The first step in this pursuit will be undertaken, in chapter seven, by considering the two poles of difference and value as part of the one debate.

The confrontation of politics based on difference and politics based on value will be characterised as a debate in which both sides have a critique of each other and answers to those critiques. Difference criticises value for creating categorisations that exclude and offers the principle of differentiation as the answer. In contrast, value criticises difference for homogenising divergent politic movements and can then offer some form of a unified categorisation as the answer to difference's problems. However, this return of values also returns difference's original objection. In this way the difference/value debate is both paralysed, in that it never transcends itself, and always in motion, in that both sides seem to offer opportunities for transcendence. An extended example of this debate will be given in the controversy within feminism over postmodernism.

Reactions to the difference/value debate, other than participation, will be analysed as fragmentation, which occurs when the left breaks down into increasingly small groups, or disillusionment, which occurs when individuals simply tire of the endlessness of the debate. Analysis of the left's collective memory thus leads to the claim that the left is enmeshed in paralysed motion or is dissolving through fragmentation or disillusionment. A path beyond the difference/value debate must therefore be opened up in order to reconstruct the left.

To open this path the preconceptions that underpin the difference/value debate will be examined by asking the question, 'what gives the accusations difference and value make against each other force'. It will be argued that all participants in the debate assume that truly revolutionary being, that is the ability to create fundamental social change, is possessed by a collective that is constituted through practice. As this collective is singular, difference and value have an object over which they can struggle. What gives value and difference's arguments against each other force, in the context of the left, is thus a common interest in constituting the revolutionary collective. It may seem paradoxical to claim that difference seeks to constitute one revolutionary collective but it is not, as difference simply asserts that the unity of the revolutionary collective will be constituted by a principle of differentiation. A path beyond the difference/value debate can then be opened by questioning the assumption of one revolutionary collective.

The alternative vision of the left that will be constructed will be called the ontology of emancipatory collectives. In this ontology it will be assumed that many collectives can effect fundamental social change, rather than assuming there can only be one revolutionary collective. The ontology of emancipatory collectives will then be constructed from this premise in three parts: a

definition of the nature of emancipatory collectives will be established in chapter eight, an analysis of inter-collective relations will be conducted in chapter nine and an assessment of the overall vision of the left that the ontology of emancipatory collectives creates will be given in chapter ten.

To define the nature of emancipatory collectives the work of Alberto Melucci will be examined. Melucci defines 'new social movements', which are those movements that have erupted since the sixties such as feminism, ecology and so on, as collective action systems that have no single organisation or structure but which consist of networks of individuals and formal and informal groups. Although Melucci grasps the eclectic nature of new social movements with this formulation it will be argued that he fails to provide an understanding of what unites such diverse elements into a single movement. Melucci's analysis will then be extended by arguing that emancipatory collectives can be viewed as collective action systems that are united by their struggle for a project of emancipation or against an experience of oppression.

At a general and abstract level emancipation and oppression will then be defined as a relationship between at least two collectives in which at least one collective enriches itself while simultaneously impoverishing at

least one other collective. The nature of 'enrich' and 'impoverish' will, however, only be defined beyond this abstract meaning through the contextualised self-definitions of collectives. The process of self-definition will then be defined as a 'boot-strapping' operation, as theorised by Barry Barnes, where individual affirmations of a definition coalesce into a system which is greater than the individuals who make it up.

Emancipatory collectives are thus defined as collective action systems that are unified around an experience of oppression or a project of emancipation which is self-defined by members of the collective. The next topic that will be analysed is the relations between emancipatory collectives that constitute the 'space' of emancipatory politics.

As collectives are based on their own self-definition of oppression this self-definition will colour their view of any other collective. A collective will thus be influenced to either misunderstand another collective, by not being able to grasp another collective's self-definition, or assimilate with the other collective, by adopting its self-definition. These two axes of influence provide the framework within which inter-collective relations develop and so forms the space of emancipatory politics. The space of emancipatory politics is thus not made up of a certain society, but rather by two axes whose nature is determined by the definition of

emancipatory collectives. The ontology of emancipatory collectives' political space is made up of divergent definitions of oppression and not by a unified vision of society.

Finally, the overall political vision that the ontology of emancipatory collectives creates will be examined. An overall political vision is needed for two reasons.

First, it gives different emancipatory collectives a framework within which they can develop inter-relations with other collectives without having to give up their own self-definition of oppression. Second, an overall vision can distinguish oppressive and emancipatory collectives which the ontology of emancipatory collectives can do through the definition of oppression proposed in chapter eight.

It will then be noted that the ontology of emancipatory collectives relies on two principles. First, the belief that there is no single revolutionary truth but many truths of emancipation or oppression. A type of revolutionary perspectivism is created in which different forms of emancipation cannot be assumed to exist in the same social field, but rather are viewed as different and potentially contradictory perspectives on oppression. Second, each actually existing form of emancipation or oppression resides in a particular context and so must be analysed in that context. The ontology of emancipatory

collectives assumes that emancipatory collectives all exist in contexts and that these contexts are made up of patterned relations between elements of collective action systems. The outlining of these two principles completes the exposition of the ontology of emancipatory collectives.

The left's traditional concern for imbalances of power between groups of people and the means to change such imbalances is retained by the ontology of emancipatory collectives without committing the left to either a single universal struggle or an empty pluralism. In this ontology liberation will no longer be strung between a collapse into individualism through difference or the fear of a totalitarianism based on value, but can be both contextualised by the self-definition of a movement and can transcend each movement by recognising each self-definition as a perspective.

CHAPTER 2: NEW SENSITIVE MARXISM.

Marxism and the Left's Collective Memory.

"beyond Marx ? But beyond which Marx ?" [Negri, 1979, 14]

The chief accusation levelled at Marxism in the left's collective memory was not that it failed to deal with developments in economics, but that it failed to deal with developments in politics.

The memory asserted that Marxism misunderstood and often opposed anti-oppression movements that did not define themselves through a class based oppression. For example, the memory implies that because Marxism concentrates on economic oppression it will only be able to grasp women's oppression when that oppression can be related to the economy. Marxism will accordingly place the aspects of feminism that it does grasp in a subordinate position to the fundamental struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In general, the memory implies that Marxism is blind to most non-class based oppressions and will systematically misapprehend any of these oppressions that it can see.

However, this criticism does not imply the rejection of Marxism by anti-oppression movements but only its restriction to political economy. If this restriction was

put into place then Marxism would become a theory of one political movement, that of the workers, among several movements. Nonetheless, it should not be assumed that Marxism is so flexible in theory and practice that it will be a simple matter for it to become part of a pluralist theory of social movements. After all, 'pluralist' is a famous and damning insult in Marxism.

In order to explore these aspects of the left's collective memory in detail the possibility of a particular or limited, rather than a universal, Marxism needs to be analysed. To do this a critical version of Marxist-Leninism will be delineated and then from this Marxist-Leninism a non-Leninist form of Marxism will be derived. Providing a complete definition of either of these versions is neither possible nor necessary within the present space. Instead, establishing possible versions of both will create a basis on which an exploration of universalism and particularism in Marxism can be conducted. That exploration will proceed further by examining Jean Baudrillard's general objection to all forms of Marxism. Finally, the nature of a non-universalist Marxism will be established by confronting its Leninist and non-Leninist forms with the results of the discussion of Baudrillard. The aim of this investigation is not to rehabilitate Marxism by dealing with any and all objections to it, but to establish the possibility that Marxism can play the role the collective

memory envisages for it, as one theory of oppression among other such theories.

Lenin: 'on the basis of capitalism'.

In April nineteen eighteen the Bolshevik Party had won a small breathing space for its Russian revolution by concluding the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany and ending Russia's part in the First World War.¹ However, the success of the Bolshevik transformation was still uncertain. Under these circumstances Lenin wrote The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government, which outlined his view that the Bolshevik revolution would only be successful if it could successfully manage the economy. Lenin argued that to do this the guidance of experts would be needed, but he also noted this was an unfortunate backward step for the Soviet Government as the salaries needed to attract such experts contradicted the revolutionary aim of evening out all salaries at the 'level of the wages of the average worker'. [Lenin, 1918b, 443: Smith, 1983] In contrast to this concern for wage levels little criticism was made by Lenin of the methods such experts might employ. On the contrary, the

1 In the following outline of Marxist-Leninism it is not being assumed that Leninism is a single unified discourse. Rather, one possible interpretation of Marxist-Leninism, its technicist strand, is being outlined. [Smith, 1983, 9-10] The account that follows is heavily indebted to Colletti, 1969: Sayer, 1979: Claudin-Urondo, 1975: Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer, 1978: and Smith, 1983.

capitalist science of scientific management was promoted.

Lenin wrote:

"The Taylor system, the last word of capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work, the introduction of the best system of accounting and control, etc....We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends." [Lenin, 1918b, 448-449]

Lenin's endorsement of the science of Taylorism meant developing work conditions under Bolshevism that were in essence the same as those then developing in capitalist countries. Lenin set the Bolshevik Revolution the task of developing an industry modeled on capitalism, albeit owned by communists. [Lenin, 1920, 494: Smith, 1983] In this way Lenin separated the content of capitalist industry from its control, which is a separation Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer have termed the 'social problematic' of Bolshevism. They describe succinctly how the Bolsheviks:

"combine an economistic view of production and a voluntaristic view of politics, and this combination is a recurrent one. The economism inheres in the notion of production as a set of necessary techniques governed by ineluctable laws of development, the voluntarism in the truncation of politics to matters of State this original expunging of the political from the productive entails." [Corrigan et.al., 1978, 43]

The social problematic of Bolshevism is rooted in the belief that the nature of the production process is

politically neutral because it is determined by technology. If the development of production is technology-based and technology is politically neutral then issues concerning the nature of production processes become irrelevant. Politics thus revolves around control of production and the nature of society outside of production but not the content of production processes. This view of the economy was derived from a particular interpretation of Marx's concept of the 'forces of production' developed prior to the Russian Revolution chiefly in Friedrich Engels' and the Second International Working Men's Association work.

The 'forces of production' can, at a simple level, be taken as the totality of forces that produce material objects of value to society and the Second International, chiefly through Engels, developed a technicist view of these forces. Technicism is based on the idea that changes in the machinery of work will change the amount and type of productive force that a society has at its disposal. [Engels, 1880, 708]

"Then came the concentration of the means of production and of the producers in large workshops and manufactories, their transformation into actual socialised means of production and socialised producers...the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually set in motion the means of production and actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists*. The means of production and production itself, had become in essence socialised. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, everyone owns his own product and brings it to

market....*The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.*" [Engels, 1880, 703-705]

Engels argued that capitalism had 'socialised' both productive forces and workers into the basis for a socialist society and that, though capitalism developed the forces of production, the content of these forces did not affect their ability to underpin socialism. It is capitalist control of the forces of production that made society capitalist and not the nature of the forces of production that capitalism created. Indeed, Engels claimed that socialism and communism were made possible by these expanded forces of production.

Engels' thus produced, in different words, the same split between a technologically determined productive base for society and the political control of those productive forces, that Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer called the 'social problematic of Bolshevism'. The source for this split between economic determinism and political voluntarism is the belief that the nature of production is politically neutral because it is technologically determined and so can be used to underpin socialism.

In order to explore the Leninist interpretation of productive forces further and to outline a non-Leninist reading of Marx. However, it should first be noted that Marx's texts are not being used here as an arbiter who

can finally settle a dispute but as a resource for the construction of theories. Given their richness it should not be surprising if the various texts of Marx can legitimate several conflicting interpretations. Accordingly, the aim here is to explore some of these interpretations in order to investigate Marxism's political vision, rather than to produce the finally definitive version of Marx's thought from Marx's texts.

The Forces of Production

Marx described the starting point of his analysis of society when he wrote that:

"The object before us, to begin with, material production.

Individuals producing in society- hence socially determined individual production- is, of course, the point of departure." [Marx, 1939, 83]

But what does the 'of course' mean ? Why begin with material production ? One of Marx's explanations was:

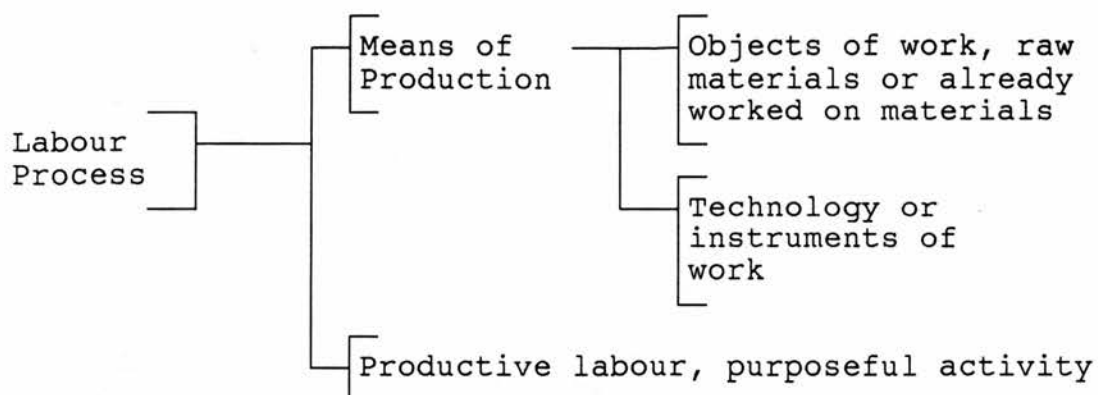
"The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity....The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature...The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men." [Marx, 1932, 149-150]

Marx both makes clear the basic question which his work addresses and asserts that this question is the only legitimate starting point for the writing of history. That these are two separate claims needs to be noted and will be returned to, but for the moment clarifying the definition of the forces of production which follows from Marx's statements will be pursued.

Marx can be summarised as assuming the existence of a subject (humans) and an object (nature/materials) and that society becomes possible when this subject works on this object. History can be created by documenting and analysing the changing relationships between and within the subject and object. Historical materialism is thus the study of the specific forms which human action on nature takes in order to create humanity's subsistence. In Marx's terms these historical forms are called a society's mode of production and are constituted by its specific arrangement of productive forces. [Poster, 1982]

Marx argued that a transhistorical concept of the mode of production can be created because all societies through all time must produce their subsistence in order to survive. A generalised, asocial conception of production is possible because, by definition, all societies produce. [Sayer, 1979, 77-80] Marx's transcendental conception of production can be represented by the following model.

Productive Forces: Model 1



Model 1 is derived from the two most direct comments on the nature of the production process found in the relevant chapter in Capital: Volume 1.

"The simple elements of the labour process are (1) purposeful activity, that is work itself, (2) the object on which that work is performed, and (3) the instruments of that work." [Marx, 1867, 284]

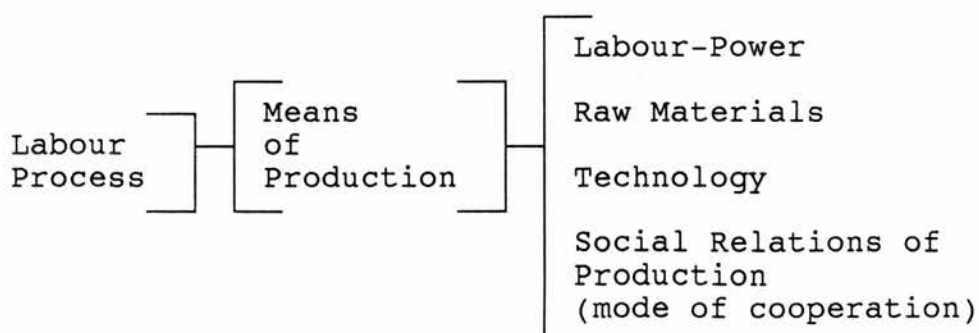
"If we look at the whole process from the point of view of its result, the product, it is plain that both the instruments and the object of labour are means of production and that the labour itself is productive labour." [Marx, 1867, 287]

Model 1 represents the abstract form of production but it can also represent a Leninist interpretation of productive forces if labour is interpreted in a certain way. Purposeful activity or productive labour must be understood as the physical activity of an individual and the organisation of labourers must be made subordinate to the instruments of work. If this interpretation is adopted then the instruments of work become the only dynamic part of the means of production because labour here refers to the pure physicality of the individual

worker. Labour would thus be understood as a timeless confrontation of the muscles, sweat and wit of a worker with materials and instruments and so would be the same across all societies. Materials are also asocial because they are either timeless as raw materials, or are objects that have been mediated by previous means of production and to trace changes in already raw mediated materials to previous means of production would either reveal them as raw materials or generate an infinite regress. Understood in this way the only dynamic component left in the means of production is technology and so the means of production would have to change through technological change, which is of course the basis of the technicist Leninism that has been outlined in this chapter.

Having developed a Leninist interpretation of productive forces a non-Leninist interpretation can be explored by outlining a second model of productive forces.

Productive Forces: Model 2.



Model 2 introduces to Model 1 the idea that the social relations of production are a separate productive force.

One formulation of this idea by Marx can be found in The German Ideology:

"The production of life, both of one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force'". [Marx and Engels, 1932, 157]

Model 2 interprets Marx's statement graphically by adding the social relations of production, or the mode of cooperation, to the means of production as a force of production separate from labour-power, materials or technology. Marx noted that this separation is characteristic of capitalism.

"Being independent of each other, the workers are isolated. They enter into relations with the capitalist, not with each other. Their co-operation only begins with the labour process, but by then they have ceased to belong to themselves. On entering the labour process they are incorporated into capital. As co-operators, as members of a working organism, they merely form a particular mode of existence of capital. Hence the productive power developed by the worker socially is the productive power of capital." [Marx, 1867, 451]

In this quote Marx separates individual and social labour in the capitalist mode of production by arguing that under capitalism workers are isolated and have only their labour power, their muscles, sweat and wit, to sell. However, when this individuality is purchased and set to work en masse social relations are formed and the

productive force of co-operation is unleashed, thereby appearing to be an achievement of the organiser, who is the capitalist. Marx outlined this process when he continued the previous passage by writing:

"The socially productive power of labour develops as a free gift to capital whenever the workers are placed under certain conditions, and it is capital which places them under these conditions. Because this power costs capital nothing, while on the other hand it is not developed by the worker until his labour itself belongs to capital, it appears as a power which capital possesses by nature- a productive power inherent in capital." [Marx, 1867, 451]

Marx argues that the separation of individual workers from the relations that organise them is specific to capitalism and Model 2 is therefore one Marxist view of capitalist production. Model 2 is also not a technicist model because the social relations of production are a dynamic contributor to change in production processes, as will be argued in the next section, and so production has a source for change other than technological change.

However, before moving on it should be noted that Models 1 and 2 have an important drawback as they fail to represent any sense of social dynamism. For instance, Marx's claim that by separating the labourer from the social relations of production the capitalist will benefit, by the appearance that the force created through cooperation is the capitalist's creation, is not presented in Model 2. This is because the Models do not make clear who brings together the elements of production

and who may benefit. Despite such limitations the setting out of the two models has graphically located a hyphen between Marx and Lenin and shown where it can be cut.

The Social Relations of Production as a Materially Productive Force.

A path to a non-Leninist and non-technicist Marxism has been opened by the introduction of the social relations of production but it needs to be explored further. This can be done by outlining the nature of the social relations of production.

The social relations of production exist because people meet and organise in order to produce and so create in that organisation a force for production. They are what Marx called a society's mode of co-operation. In capitalism this power of cooperation is separated from individual workers and so can be considered a separate materially productive force for production. For example, the stuff of 'scientific management', that is how much space each worker may have, where they stand, who they will be able to communicate with and so on, should itself be considered a productive force. The question can therefore be posed, how do these social relations relate to the production process as a whole ? This question can be broadly answered by outlining two sorts of social relations of production in those that are in-the-factory and those that are in-society.

First of all, there are social relations of production that are physically close to the production process. These are relations which occur in close proximity to the production of a commodity and can in a sense 'see' the object they help produce. They can be called the social relations of production that are in-the-factory. Two senses of these social relations can be outlined by drawing a distinction between social relations which organise workers and social relations embedded in the physical environment of a work-place.

The way in which workers in a factory, or any production process, are organised is a social relation of production. The sub-division of work into certain discrete stages needed to produce a commodity, the consequent organisation of those stages for optimum production and the assigning of workers and worker tasks to each stage is a matter, primarily, of implementing prior conceptualisation and design. If this is correctly done then such an operation should result in a production process which can produce greater numbers of the relevant commodity, even if all that has been altered is the organisation of workers.

The second sort of social relations of production that are in-the-factory are those that affect the physical

fabric of the production process.² These social relations take the form of buildings or any material constraints that are part of a production process in which prior designs and conceptions are embodied that will order a process in a certain way. Within a factory or office a worker will confront the four walls, the placement and nature of tools, materials, and rest and work stations as neutral objects when, in fact, they may have been specifically designed to create a certain form of production. As these social relations are embodied in things they may be more or less obvious to an observer depending on their nature. For example, the speed of a production line confronts a worker as a disembodied, mechanical fact but speeding up such a line will reveal to the least observant worker that human conceptions are part of the line. In contrast, the provision of small and frequent places for lunch and rest breaks may appear to be natural, when they have in fact been designed to prevent large numbers of workers gathering together.

The social relations of production have so far been analysed only to the extent that they directly impinge on the process of production. However, the social relations of production that exist beyond the factory wall can also be given consideration. Marx wrote:

2 The following analysis of the second type of social relations that are in-the-factory is drawn from work on the labour process found in such publications as: Hales, 1980: Levidow and Young, 1981: Levidow and Young, 1985: and Thompson, 1983.

"Man himself is the basis of his material production, as of any other production that he carries on. All circumstances, therefore, which affect man, the *subject* of production, more or less modify all his functions and activities, and therefore too his functions and activities as the creator of material wealth...In this respect it can in fact be shown that *all* human relations and functions and in whatever form they may appear, influence material production" [Marx, quoted in Corrigan et.al., 1978, 4]

In this quote Marx argued that the social relations of production, at their broadest, can be anything that affects a person who participates in the labour process. With this claim a host of social relations become relevant to the production process. Legal, sexual, racial and other relations, in fact all those relations that are commonly included under the term 'civil society', can now be theorised as being a force for production. The exact nature of any particular connection between production and civil society will need to be specified by analytical and historical work but if Marx's comments are endorsed then the definition of productive forces becomes open-ended.

For example, workers gain most of the sustenance that enables them to give the socially average amount of labour to the production process from certain social structures. Once such structure has been the nuclear family. In white nuclear families relationships between the members form a certain pattern: the worker is usually male and controls the economic basis of the family; the partner is usually female and acts as a 'reservoir of

nurturance', physical and emotional, for both the worker and their children, is economically dependent on the man and provides free domestic labour; and, last, the children are both dependent on their parents and are under their control. [Barrett and McIntosh, 1982]³ If this structure can be found in society as a general pattern of the way male workers recreate their labour power, then the structure can be regarded as a force of production.

Changes in the structure of the nuclear family would thus bring changes in production. For example, the feminisation of clerical work that has been experienced this century in the Western world means that the structure of the nuclear family may be being altered through the creation of an independent financial basis for women and the need to reproduce a form of labour power for women that is relevant to the work-place rather than domestic labour. [Crompton and Jones, 1984] The manner in which this is achieved affects the reproduction of workers and so affects a force of production, whether it occurs through a redivision of domestic labour between men and women, a reassessment of the way children are

3 Barrett and McIntosh's view holds good for white British families but there are significant variations for black British families. These will not be explored here as this would make a short example overly complex but they will be given greater space in chapter nine. See Barrett and McIntosh, 1985: Amos and Parma, 1984: Ramazangolu, 1986: Kazi, 1986: Lees, 1986: and, Mirza, 1986.

socialised or the imposition on women of the dual responsibilities of mother and worker.

In summary, the social relations of production, as the fourth element of the means of production in a capitalist society, can be divided into two parts: those immediately near to the process of production and those outside of that process which chiefly concern the reproduction of labour power. The social relations of production that are in-the-factory can themselves be considered two part; the organisation of workers by non-material relationships and their organisation through material constraints. As noted above in the distinction between Models 1 and 2 of productive forces the positing of the social relations of production as a materially productive force breaks with Leninism by providing a source for change in production processes other than technological change.

The State and Revolution

The Marxism that can be built around the introduction of social relations into the means of production not only contradicts the Marxist-Leninist understanding of production but also implies a contradiction of Marxist-Leninist theory of the state and revolution. An examination of these differences will further develop the Leninist and non-Leninist forms of Marxism.

It has already been noted, in the discussion of Lenin's and Engels' theories of the forces of production, how a technicist understanding of these forces takes the content of production out of society's control. The separation of a politically neutral production process from civil society means that, logically, political action can only occur either in civil society or over the control of production. The nature of civil society thus becomes crucial for Leninists, as it is here that political activity will chiefly be defined.

Civil society has several landmarks but for Leninists the most significant is the state. Lenin defined the state in this way.

"The state is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable....According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of 'order', which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes." [Lenin, 1918a, 314-315]

Lenin argued that the state only exists if there is class conflict because the state's role is to enforce the rule of one class over another. Under capitalism the state enforces the wishes of the bourgeoisie and is the institutionalisation of the bourgeoisie's power, its managing executive. This rule is exercised through a standing army and the police, supported by a bureaucracy.

The key political task when seeking to overthrow the bourgeoisie is thus the confrontation with the state and Lenin stresses this will occur in two stages.

First, the bourgeois or capitalist state will be smashed in a violent confrontation with an armed and revolutionary proletariat. Second, a proletarian state will emerge which will dominate the remaining bourgeoisie, this is the famous dictatorship of the proletariat. The second stage is made necessary by two factors. First, for Lenin, where there is class conflict there will also be a state and, second, some elements of the ruling class can be expected to survive the first stage's violent confrontation. The combination of these two factors means that there will be both class conflict and a state after a proletarian revolution because there will still be two classes. The initial change under the dictatorship of the proletariat will simply be that working people will control the state, not that the state will be destroyed. The central task of the proletarian state will then be the elimination of the former ruling class and as this is progressively achieved the state will wither away, because there will be no class conflict to call a state into being as there will only be one class. [Lenin, 1918a, 320-326] Lenin's is a simple theory which clearly identifies the nature of the state and also the primary targets of a proletarian revolution.

Having specified the fundamentals of Lenin's theory of the state and revolution a contrasting non-Leninist account can be developed. An obvious hypothesis, in the light of the non-Leninist theory of production that has been proposed, would be that the state is heavily involved in the management of the social relations of production. Such a hypothesis would have to account for the way the state may try to manage the place of women in the family or racial discrimination in order to aid the production of commodities. Consideration would also have to be given to the state's role in social relations of production that are in-the-factory. For example, in the state's promotion of investment in production or its involvement in wage bargaining.

Although these possibilities cannot be rigorously developed here, as this would take this chapter too far from its central aim, it is already clear that such a non-Leninist theory of the state would offer a very different form of revolution to Leninism. Instead of seizing one organisation and then bending it to the workers will, the non-Leninist Marxism would have to contend with a diffuse array of social relations that are managed in varying ways and degrees by different parts of the state. Revolution for this Marxism would no longer be a clear-cut operation of smashing but would involve multiple conflicts in diverse areas of society. For example, the complete internal reorganisation of

factories and offices would have to be undertaken to combat capitalist social relations of production, rather than just their seizure and nationalisation. In addition, all the various indirect social relations of production would have to be considered and so revolutionary politics would have to address the transformation of social structures such as the nuclear family. The nature of revolution would accordingly become blurred for a non-Leninist Marxism compared, that is, to Lenin's clarity.

The blurring of revolution's nature reveals a difficulty with the non-Leninist Marxism that is being proposed because this Marxism may be unable to locate a structural division between workers and employers under capitalism. Instead, non-Leninist Marxism may see many sites of oppression in the various social relations that affect production because, having expanded the social relations of production to cover all relations in society which affect production, it is as if production has been extended to cover all of society and the two have merged. All the oppressions that can be identified as part of the social relations of production would thus have an equal claim as oppressive relations that need to be combatted and eliminated. If any social relation that affects production becomes a material force for production, then the danger is that everything will be held to affect production. Marxism will then become, in effect, a

pluralist social theory with no means of valuing the different claims of various oppressions.

To deal with this problem a re-examination of the Marxist definition of exploitation is necessary. In exploring this definition a principle must be sought which can order social relations as central and peripheral in relation to the subjugation of labour. If this cannot be found then the non-Leninist Marxism appears to be barely a form of Marxism at all.

Where Class Hatred Permeates Science

Italian theorist Toni Negri argued that in the Grundrisse Marx established that:

"The theory of surplus value...becomes the dynamic centre, the dynamic synthesis of Marx's thought, the point where the objective analysis of capital and the subjective analysis of class behaviour come together, where class hatred permeates his science."
[Negri, 1979, 9]

Negri's claim is one of the most decisive formulations of the Marxist belief that capitalist exploitation, or more precisely the mechanism that orders the fundamental exploitation of capitalist societies, is defined through the theory of surplus value. This theory identifies why the relationship between capitalists and workers consists of a structural and necessary exploitation of workers by capitalists if, that is, the capitalist wishes to

succeed. At heart the idea is simple, for it is possible to pay less for a labourer's work than the labourer can produce.

Marx noted that between buying and selling there can be a production process in which the capitalist can use his or her money to create commodities by buying the various components of the means of production in order to create a production process. The capitalist must buy the means of production as commodities in order to make more commodities. Marx then noted that the value of the commodity of labour that is bought by a capitalist can be less than the value that is produced by that labour and that a labourer's product can therefore exceed in value the cost of hiring the labourer to produce it. When this occurs new value, surplus value, is created and lands in the lap of the person who set in train the production process, the capitalist.⁴

The theory of surplus value identifies exploitation by pointing out that the creation of new value derives from workers but is taken by capitalists. Surplus value appears to be the property of the capitalist because it is a capitalist who sets in train the production process

4 This is a very simple version of the theory of surplus value, which takes no account of complicated debates concerning both the theory of value and surplus value and arguments concerning the nature of 'exploitation'. See Steedman, 1977: Steedman et.al. 1981: Clarke, 1980: Rankin, 1987: Roberts, 1987: Carchedi 1977 & 1983.



in which it is created but, in fact, new value derives from paying workers less than the value they produce. According to Marx, new value derives from the workers' labour and not the capitalists' entrepreneurship. Exploitation can then be defined as the 'theft' of workers' products or as 'that capitalists appropriate what they do not produce'. [Cohen, 1979]

The theory of surplus value can act as the dynamic centre of a Marxist theory of work-place based oppression, whether Leninist or non-Leninist, by acting as an epistemological principle which organises the production process around the specific exploitation that characterises capitalist production. Marxism can then order the many elements identified as relevant to production by the social relations of production according to their relevance to exploitation. An example of this is the connection between the extraction of greater relative surplus value and the social relations of production.

The extraction of greater relative surplus value occurs when either the hours of work remain the same, or even shorten, and the intensity of work, or productivity level, is increased or the value of labour power is reduced. In the first case the capitalist obtains more work for the same time and cost and in the second procures the same work for the same time and less cost.

This process is termed the real subsumption of labour and it creates relative surplus value. Greater relative surplus value can accordingly be achieved if workers attain greater productivity levels for the same rate of pay through, for example, developments in the social relations of production. Changes can create work places and methods that increase productivity, for instance Fordism and the production line, or can attempt to manage the identity of the worker to create a more productive worker, for example by creating a healthier or better trained worker. In the extraction of relative surplus-value there is a direct connection between the social relations of production and exploitation.

Further, this connection of social relations and the extraction of relative surplus value allows the contributions of the various social relations of production to exploitation to be understood. For example, it could be argued that providing an emotional haven for children is of less immediate importance to production than providing the male worker with food and so some of the roles the woman plays in the nuclear family may be more directly related to exploitation than others. On the face of it, it is in this way possible to examine the various social relations of production and to order them according to their relevance to exploitation. If this were done then the non-Leninist Marxism would be centered around exploitation but would also include as forces for

production all the various social relations of production. The non-Leninist Marxism would thus be centrally concerned with the division of society into bourgeoisie and proletariat but would also take into account the effect of the social relations of production on that division.

Put this way the present version of a non-Leninist Marxism is not a pluralist social theory, however it does leave open some important questions. For instance, what does it mean to say that feeding a worker is more 'important' or more 'directly related' to production than looking after that worker's children ? The mechanism for ordering the social relations of production still appears to be unclear. Unfortunately, this and other questions must be disregarded at present as they entail extending this analysis beyond the task of establishing the possibility of a non-Leninist Marxism, which the connection of the social relations of production to exploitation completes.⁵

Two different possible Marxisms have been established, though both only in broad outline. In order to explore the nature of universalism in Marxism and then to finally

5 Another important question is whether the theory of surplus value can take the weight being asked of it. This question is particularly important in relation to monopolies where it may in fact be possible to systematically sell commodities over their value. [Sweezy, 1979, 27-30]

establish whether either of the two forms can be a non-universal theory of economic oppression Baudrillard's objections to Marxism will now be examined.

Marx's Naturalism.

Baudrillard argued that when Marx developed his theory of capitalism he made the naturalist assumption that humans are productive animals with asocial needs and desires. Baudrillard wrote that because of this assumption Marx:

"changed nothing basic: nothing regarding the *idea* of man *producing* himself in his infinite determinations, and continually surpassing himself towards his own end.

Marx translated this concept into the logic of material production and the historical dialectic of modes of production. But differentiating modes of production renders unchallengeable the evidence of production as the determinant instance. It generalises the economic mode of rationality over the entire expanse of human history, as the generic mode of human becoming." [Baudrillard, 1973, 33]

Baudrillard went on to claim that Marx's naturalist assumption is the basis for his claim to universality. That is, by claiming that all societies are based on the fundamental necessity of production and then claiming to be the definitive analysis of production Marxism could claim to be the universal analysis of society. For Baudrillard this meant that Marxism became 'self-fetishising' because it took itself for objective reality when it was in fact based on a particular set of assumptions.

"The proposition that a concept is not merely an interpretive hypothesis but a universal movement depends on pure metaphysics." [Baudrillard, 1973, 47]

Marxism's naturalism underpins its claim to universality but the metaphysical assumptions that this naturalism needs, for instance the belief that there is a subject with natural needs beyond the logic of exchange, are themselves ungrounded and so Marxism can be criticised for relying on a purely metaphysical leap. These arguments are the basis of Baudrillard's rejection of Marxism but, paradoxically, they suffer from a similar reliance on metaphysics.

Baudrillard rejects Marxism because it relies on the statement 'it is true that people become people at the point when they produce' but he does so by relying on the statement 'it is not true that people become people at the point when they produce', thereby relying on the same type of metaphysics as Marxism. Having pointed out that Marxism makes the metaphysical shift from hypothesis to universality Baudrillard's criticism stays within the standards of universality and truth that Marxism has established and rejects Marxism for falling short of those standards. In short, Baudrillard does not reconsider Marxism as an interpretive hypothesis but rejects it as a failed form of truth. To avoid repeating the metaphysical mistake he criticises in Marxism,

Baudrillard would have to alter the standards by which he judges theories.

To fully reject a universalism based on naturalist presumptions Baudrillard would have to assume that all theories are based on hypotheses and not facts. Baudrillard criticised the Marxist assumption 'it is true that people become people at the point when they produce' but he did not evaluate the consequences of rejecting considerations of truth and analysing a Marxism based on the statement 'what if people become people at the point when they produce'. The addition of the 'what-if' creates the basis for a non-universalist theory of Marxism by pointing out that it does not matter whether Marxism's basic hypothesis is true or not because indulging in the search for such truths makes the mistake Baudrillard identified of moving metaphysically from interpretive hypotheses to universalities. What matters is that a social theory can be developed from certain hypotheses without having to claim that these hypotheses are universally valid.

When Marx stated that "Individuals producing in society- hence socially determined individual production- is, of course, the point of departure", he set out his basic orientation and understood it not as an interpretive hypothesis but as a universality. [Marx, 1939, 83] However, Baudrillard's objection shows that Marx's

orientation is simply one question among others that might be asked. For example, a theory might begin from the question 'what if people in their sexual relations', which might lead to a feminist theory, or 'what if people become people through their racial relations', which might lead to a theory of black liberation. Baudrillard thus reveals that the condition for creating a non-universal Marxism is the disconnection of Marxism's basic orientation from the claim that this orientation is the only fundamental question which can be asked of society.

The two interpretations of Marxism can now be connected to these arguments because in both cases a Marxist theory orders the various relations that make up a society according to a particular interpretation of Marxism's basic orientation. The technicist tendency within Marxist-Leninism separates the fundamental area of production from civil society and then claims that production is determined by technological change whereas civil society can be politically determined. For technicism political issues must then revolve around the control of production and the transformation of the state, while other social relations are subordinated to these twin tasks.

Leninism's basic orientation is determined by its interpretation of Marx's own orientation. By interpreting the means of production in a technicist manner and

assuming that this is the only possible interpretation of society, Marxist-Leninism makes itself the only valid view of oppression to which all others must be subordinated. The manipulation conducted by Leninist groups noted in the left's collective memory stems at least partially from Leninism's collapsing of the distinction between asking a certain question and assuming that this is a universally valid question.

Outlining a non-technicist Marxism has shown how social relations such as gender and race must be in some way hierarchically ordered in relation to production if Marxism is not to lose its distinctive orientation. If the non-Leninist Marxism did not hierarchise the social relations of production then it would not be able to understand which social relations were more relevant to production and as, on the face of it, all social relations are relevant, this would lead to a Marxism in which all social relations were equally significant. Like Leninism the non-technicist Marxism must order society according to its basic Marxist orientation. In order to remain a form of Marxism the non-Leninist Marxism developed in this chapter can be centered on the extraction of surplus-value. Social relations such as race and gender would then become organised according to their place in the system of exploitation. The role of women as mothers may thus be seen by this Marxism as less

central than the role of women as a reserve army of labour.

However, if this non-Leninist Marxism were also to be a non-universal Marxism it would have to recognise that its ordering of social relations was done on the basis of the hypothesis 'what-if people become people when they produce'. Such a non-universalist Marxism would leave open the possibility that in a different 'what-if' gender, race and production relations might have totally different connections, where production may not be dominant or where 'woman as mother' might be considered more important than 'women as the reserve army of labour'.

The crucial difference between a universalist and a non-universalist Marxism is whether it crosses the metaphysical divide identified by Baudrillard and believes its interpretive hypotheses to be universally valid statements. A non-universal Marxism thus recognises that the basic orientation of historical materialism is not the only orientation that can be taken toward society and oppression. Paradoxically, this also means that Marxism should stick to its basic orientation and should not try to theorise all oppressions as somehow Marxist oppressions. A non-universal Marxism does not need to encompass every oppression that may emerge, but instead concentrates on the oppression it has identified, work-

place based or economic oppression. A non-universalist Marxism should also be a fundamentalist Marxism.

The Theory of Work-Place Based Oppression

It was noted earlier that when Marx defined his basic orientation he conducted two operations. First, he defined what his work addressed and, second, he claimed that this was the only legitimate starting point for history or political economy. A theory of work-place based oppression can utilise Marxism, and fulfil the role for it outlined in the collective memory as one anti-oppression movement among other such movements, first, by rejecting the claim that Marxism has defined the only legitimate starting point for studies of society and, second, by recognising that this need not affect the acceptance of Marxism's orientation as an important one.

Accordingly, the metaphysical claim that Baudrillard identified in Marx can be rejected in favour of treating the definition of Marxism's object as an interpretive hypothesis and so any attempt to create or utilise a non-universal Marxism must carefully define what Marxism's object is and then examine the results of assuming that perspective. The results that can be gained by making Marx's assumption, that humans are productive, may be important in analysing economic oppression but they draw no authority from absolute truth.

A theory of work-place based oppression can make use of the theoretical and empirical resources of Marxism and be consistent with the collective memory's claim that the hegemony of Marxism over liberatory struggles has given way to a multiplicity of anti-oppression struggles only by surrounding Marxism with methodological guards. Otherwise it will find itself, like Marxism before it, proclaiming itself the fundamental struggle for liberation. Otherwise it will find itself deriding and insulting the struggles of those whose oppression cannot be understood through the eyes of the work-place. Otherwise feminists will become bourgeois again, sexuality a titillating distraction and skin colour a threat to working class solidarity.

Chapter Three: Universalism and the Post-Sixties Left.

Universality and Value.

The analysis of Marxism posits a distinction between Marxism's basic orientation and the universality of that orientation, but the memory also posits the rise, since the sixties, of movements which combat different forms of oppression to class oppression. The relationship between these statements can now be examined for if Marxism's orientation is non-universal then so, perhaps, are the orientations of all post-sixties anti-oppression movements. This would imply that the left is made up of many different anti-oppression movements all of which address a particular oppression and none of which make up an all-encompassing vision of liberation.

The result of analysing Marxism was that, in short, Marxism's political values are not universal but are still politically relevant. 'Universality' can here be understood as the positing of one all-encompassing anti-oppression struggle, whereas a 'value' can be termed the basic political orientation of any one anti-oppression struggle. Based on this distinction it can be claimed that a political theory or movement takes as its starting point a basic question or orientation toward society. Examples of such orientations are believing that society is determined by its production or society being

determined by the sex of its inhabitants, but each movement has such an orientation or set of values around which its theories and actions are structured. Each orientation will thus prioritise some political issues over others and so will exclude or downgrade the concerns of some oppressed groups.

A detailed example of the way that particular orientations influence theories and exclude some groups can be given through Nicky Hart's analysis of the tendency of British women to vote disproportionately for the Conservative Party.¹ Hart claims that theorists have explained this phenomenon by describing working class women as 'deferential voters' who have an in-built tendency to vote for the traditional authority represented by the Conservatives. Hart notes that theorists only need a notion like 'deferentiality' because they assume that working class women should identify first and foremost with the working class party, the Labour Party. Working class women are thus seen as having a form of false consciousness when they vote for the Conservatives because they defer their true class interests. [Hart, 1989, 21-25 & 38-41]

1 As Hart's article is being used as an example it is not essential that her case be proven beyond doubt. Instead her argument must clearly illustrate the point being made by this thesis. However, for a similar view of the relationship between women and the labour movement see Campbell, 1984, 217-234.

Hart attacks this view by demonstrating that it is possible that women had interests as women, and not as working class, that led them to vote Conservative. She argues that working class men have traditionally had control of the family income and have used it in their own interests and not necessarily in the interests of their partner or family. To establish this Hart analyses family income and expenditure and argues that women were given, by their men, an income that barely kept the family alive, while men retained money which they spent on alcohol and cigarettes. She notes that expenditure on drink was most probably the largest single item of household expenditure from the eighteen eighties to after the Second World War, ahead of both bread and meat. She also notes that women's knowledge of their husband's alcohol expenditure was around eighty per cent below what men actually spent because women did not know the total household income. [Hart, 1989, 31-37]

As the Labour Party and other left-wing groups often organised around the pub life of working men, Hart argues there is probably a link between men's treatment of women and women's dislike of the Labour Party. Hart develops a picture in which women have good reason to be sceptical of the socialism practised by their men and claims that an opposition to Labour may well have developed as women and their children went to bed hungry and early in order to save fuel for the fire, while their men spent the

household income in warm pubs organising the labour movement. [Hart, 1989, 38-41]

Hart's theory establishes the possibility that working class women voted Conservative because their own interests, as women, were served by such a vote. She shows that it is only the preconceptions of class theorists, who have assumed that all working class people have an equal and obvious interests in voting Labour, that makes women's support for the Conservatives a puzzle. Hart's analysis thus shows that assuming that the interests of working class men and women can be equally explained by class may not be valid because there can be divisions between men and women. What class theorists took to be a universal theory can actually exclude women and their experiences.

Hart's work illustrates the argument that any movement develops from a particular orientation, whether that orientation is based on gender inequality or economic exploitation, and that each particular orientation will concentrate attention on certain aspects of society to the exclusion of other aspects. Each political movement will create a categorisation of both society and the oppression that it fights and this categorisation will include some aspects of society and will exclude or

ignore others. This 'logic' will be called the logic of exclusion and inclusion.²

The Logic of Exclusion and Inclusion.

Generalising the distinction between universality and value means that all political theories and movements can be regarded as having particular orientations which exclude and include. However, this claim has to be underpinned by a suspicion toward assertions of universality because once any claim to universality is considered suspect then all movements can be treated as if the revelation of an exclusion from them can be expected, but without this suspicion the quest for a universal theory still seems valid. The left's collective memory thus implies that a substructure of suspicion for the logic of exclusion and inclusion has emerged. Two sources for this substructure can be noted in the breakdown of Marxism's hegemony over liberatory politics and the rise of poststructural and postmodern theories.

The collective memory draws attention to the way that, since the sixties, political movements have arisen which challenge the assumed universality of both socialism and

2 The outline of this logic is indebted to poststructuralist and postmodernist thought. See Foucault, 1969; Eribon, 1992, 37-39; Lyotard, 1986, 37-39; Derrida, 1967b, 278-293; Hekman, 1990; Flax, 1990 and the section on postmodernism in feminism in chapter seven of this thesis.

other political movements. These challenges have, in turn, created both a suspicion of political universals and a history of political exclusions. It has already been noted, in the example of working class women who voted Conservative, that the specificity of class theory can exclude women. The memory also notes that similar attacks have been mounted by movements not only against class theory but also between anti-oppression movements. It should not then be surprising if some movements come to question the validity of any claim to universality when they have had to struggle into existence against a pro-claimed universality which excluded them. Simply put, to have been excluded by a political movement which claims to be universal provides a basis for suspicion of claims to universality. That some movements go on to establish new universals does not hide the fact that the process of many anti-oppression movements emerging, as outlined in the left's collective memory, continually creates the basis for the suspicion of universals in the repeated failure of existing universals to include all oppressions. [Phillips, 1987: Amos and Parma, 1984]

A theoretical suspicion of universals has also arisen since the sixties in poststructural and postmodern theory. [Foucault, 1981, 131-183] These are two related, but diverse, bodies of thought which, among other issues, analyse the basic categories of Western thought. For example, a common theme between the two has been a

critique of the 'subject'. They have argued that if a rational, unified subject is in control of its thought then all products of thought must be considered the intentional and controlled productions of human beings. Poststructuralists and postmodernists have then drawn on influences such as Freud and Nietzsche to question this assumption of a unified, rational subject by, for instance, arguing that thought might result from the unconscious or from chance. [Foucault, 1972, 3-17: Deleuze, 1962: Derrida, 1972a: Descombes, 1979] Once the universality of the unified subject is questioned political readings can follow which argue that the subject has also been white, male and pro-capitalist. The subject then appears as a political force and not a neutral, universal basis for reason. Poststructuralism and postmodernism have in this way questioned the universal nature of categories such as the subject and rationality and then have come to question the legitimacy of 'universality' itself. Poststructuralism and postmodernism thus hold up a theoretical mirror to the political suspicion of universals that emerged from the breakdown of Marxism's hegemony over left thought. [Sturrock, 1979: Coward and Ellis, 1977: Flax, 1990: Hekman, 1990]

Poststructural and postmodern philosophies share with post-sixties anti-oppression movements a suspicion of universals and so both a practical political experience

and a sophisticated philosophy can underpin a suspicion of universals. Once this suspicion is created then the suspicion of all values can follow because the suspicion of universals underpins the logic of exclusion and inclusion.

One last component needs to be added to the logic of exclusion and inclusion and its substructure of suspicion in order to fully explicate that logic. This is the equation of exclusion with oppression. The collective memory notes that groups, ideas or interests that are excluded from an anti-oppression movement feel themselves to be oppressed, just as if they had been excluded from power by their own oppressors. For example, Barbara Omolade argued that:

"By confining their theories to their own particular history and culture, white feminists have denied the history and culture of women of colour and have objectively excluded them from equal participation in the women's movement." [Omolade, 1980, 247]

Omolade then goes on to accuse white feminist of racism for excluding black women. Omolade's accusation is an example of a general experience in feminism, as Rowbotham noted when she wrote that feminism's tendency to muffle differences was:

"fiercely attacked by Afro-Caribbean and Asian women in Britain from the late nineteen seventies. They rejected an invoked unity of sisterhood based on hegemonic privilege. Similar criticisms came from many other groups of women- for example, lesbians,

women with disabilities, and older women."
[Rowbotham, 1989, 219-220]

The equation of exclusion with oppression is not exclusive to black liberation struggles or feminism but has occurred in most anti-oppression movements since the nineteen sixties. For example, feminism has itself been excluded from socialist struggles and so has criticised the socialist movement for oppression through exclusion. [Campbell, 1984] The equation of exclusion with oppression is based on the claim that if a group is excluded from a liberation struggle then that liberation struggle will continue the oppression of the excluded group by failing to address the problems of the excluded.

The logic of exclusion and inclusion claims that each anti-oppression movement creates a categorisation that will include some social groups and exclude others because no movement can be considered a universal movement. Such exclusions are felt, by an excluded group, to be an oppression of essentially the same type whether it is maintained by a dominant power in society, such as men against women, or by another anti-oppression movement, such as male dominated unions against women. Anti-oppression movements based on unified values can thus be expected to be oppressors because their orientation will exclude some social group.

By disclosing the logic of exclusion and inclusion the left's collective memory leads to serious difficulties for anti-oppression movements based on unified orientations, because creating such an orientation now appears to be the equivalent of being oppressive. The twin attacks of poststructuralist theory and the political practice of post-sixties movements thus create a break in anti-oppression politics with any movement that is based on a single unified set of values. This is not to claim that this process has been linear or that the break is clean, but that there is a logic, identified by the left's collective memory, which cannot be ignored. The logic of exclusion and inclusion may not cover all left politics but neither can the left ignore its consequences.

Exclusion and Expansion.

At its strongest the logic of exclusion and inclusion asserts that any attempt to base politics on a unified set of values will create oppression. However, the logic of exclusion and inclusion is perhaps simplistic because it concentrates on a straightforward confrontation between a claim of universality and the howls of the excluded and so ignores the fact that politics involves more complicated interactions than just stand-offs. Perhaps, the logic simply neglects processes of political negotiation which can overcome exclusions. In addition,

negotiations between political movements might be particularly expected when a confrontation is between movements that are all, at least nominally, committed to fighting oppression.

The obvious negotiation to consider is whether or not a movement can progressively include the excluded. That is, even if oppression by exclusion is accepted as inevitable, it can then be asked whether movements can gradually expand by including any group which asserts it is being oppressed by exclusion. The left could then answer the logic of exclusion and inclusion by making universality a process or aim that is gradually achieved through sensitivity to the inclusions and exclusions that have been created.

An example of such a response to exclusion is Nancy Hartstock's reworking of Marxist theory from a feminist perspective. Hartstock argued that socialism in the United States of America suffered from serious problems because it failed to organise on a large scale and failed to connect the experiences of working class people to the theories and practices of socialism. Hartstock then claimed that these problems could be overcome if socialism adopted feminist methodologies. [Hartstock, 1975, 56-58] Such methods were valuable because they were based on the premise that theories must be grounded in the experiences of individuals. Feminism thus offered

socialism a means of connecting theory and practice.

Hartstock then built on these claims by arguing:

"If all that I have said about feminism as a method rooted in dealing with everyday life holds true, what is it that makes this mode of analysis a force for revolution ? There are three factors of particular importance: (1) The focus on everyday life and experience makes action a necessity, not a moral choice or an option. We are not fighting other people's battles but our own. (2) The nature of our understanding of theory is altered and theory is brought into an integral and everyday relation with practice. (3) Theory leads directly to a transformation of social relations in both consciousness and in reality because of its close connection to real needs." [Hartstock, 1975, 64]

Hartstock claimed that if socialism adopted this feminist practice then it could be reinvigorated and again become a universal theory incorporating both feminism and black liberation. [Hartstock, 1975, 62-64] Hartstock therefore believed that insights from an oppression excluded by socialism could redefine socialism and recreate a universal anti-oppression movement. For Hartstock, once socialism included feminism its universality would be restored.

It thus seems possible for universality to be redefined as a project which will continually expand as new exclusions come to light. What could be taken to be universal at any particular moment would then become the existing orientation, which is universal until proven otherwise. Unfortunately, such an expansionist vision suffers from a crucial difficulty, whose exposition will

deepen the problems posed for the left by the logic of exclusion and inclusion.

A division of inclusion and exclusion among oppressed groups is created as a by-product of a particular definition of oppressor and oppressed. That is, the logic of exclusion and inclusion points out there are social groups who may be excluded from both categories of a particular definition of oppressor and oppressed. For example, socialism can define oppressor and oppressed through Marxist theory as the bourgeoisie and proletariat. However, this means that the specific oppression of women will be excluded from socialism. In this way, women can be oppressed through exclusion by the socialist movement, that is by workers who are themselves oppressed. The excluded can be oppressed by the oppressed. The expansionist theory then claims that if an oppressed group oppresses an excluded group then the excluded should be included within the definition of oppressed. To do this the oppressed and the excluded group would have to merge, but this assumes that the ability of different oppressed groups to amalgamate is unproblematic. Unfortunately, there are reasons to expect conflicts between oppressed groups that will render such mergers problematic.

Conflict between oppressed groups can occur when an oppressed group, who have excluded a different group that

is also oppressed in a different oppression, is also oppressed by the excluded group. An oppressed group that excludes might itself be oppressed by the excluded group by means other than exclusion. If this occurs then any attempt to amalgamate these groups will be tantamount to attempts to amalgamate oppressor and oppressed, which is distinct from the amalgamation of excluded and oppressed.

Turning again to feminism and socialism it has already been noted, through Hart's analysis of the Conservative voting tendencies of British women, that the Labour movement may be a masculine movement whose interests are not those of working class women. If most workers are men whose political movement privileges the role of the male production worker then this oppressed group may also be sexist. It may, as Hart argues, be made up of men who both impoverish their partners and families while simultaneously being committed to a 'pub socialism'. To then ask women to simply amalgamate with this male socialism would be to ignore real contradictions of political interest that exist between men and women.

A second example of oppression between oppressed groups is Omolade's accusation that white feminists have been racist. Omolade notes that the oppression of black women exists, in part, because of white women and so contradicts solidarity between black and white women. Omolade also claims that sexism contradicts solidarity

between black men and black women. She accordingly writes:

"The racism of white women will not allow them to give us the right to speak on our own behalf, and the male chauvinism of black men will not allow them to give us the right to speak on our own behalf. *We must take the right to speak from them.*" [Omolade, 1980, 256]

The 'expansion theory', as a means of overcoming the logic of exclusion and inclusion, cannot stand without the assumption that oppressed groups can merge and this assumption is questionable because there is no guarantee that some oppressed groups do not oppress other oppressed groups. Instead of assuming there can be mutual amalgamations between oppressed groups there are grounds for assuming there will be conflicts between oppressed groups that are exactly the conflict of oppressor and oppressed. Contradictions and conflicts, not simply exclusion, can be expected between the oppressed and so the expansion theory as a solution to the logic of exclusion and inclusion falls.

In summary, the implications of the left's collective memory are that it cannot be assumed that any struggle is a universal struggle. Further, if a political group's unified set of values are not universal then it can be assumed that it oppresses by exclusion and so it can be claimed that all anti-oppression groups based on unified values are also oppressor groups. It has also been argued

that oppressed groups may enter into conflict with each other, which will make it impossible to *a priori* expect all anti-oppression struggles to merge. Taken together these implications create a vision of the left fragmenting as each oppressed group splinters under the pressures of those it has excluded. The distinction first established in the analysis of Marxism between a political group's particular orientation and the claim that this orientation is universal, a distinction implied by the left's collective memory, has thus led to the fragmentation of a liberatory politics based on unified sets of values.

The Failure of Unified Values.

At its most powerful the logic of exclusion and inclusion claims that any political theories, actions or movements based on unified values will be oppressive. One strand of the left's collective memory thus seems to lead to untenable results for the left. However, in the collective memory there is also an indication of a totally different reaction to the problems of value based politics. The alternative to value-based politics is to examine the possibility of a politics which pursues a basis in difference. This possibility will be explored in the next section of this thesis, first, through detailed analyses of the difference based theories of Deleuze and Guattari and Lyotard, and, second, by a consideration in

general of the answers difference based theories offer to the difficulties implied by the left's collective memory.

It has been argued in this chapter that once the suspicion has been established that any anti-oppression politics cannot be a universal politics then all political movements can be considered particular orientations. Each articulation of an oppression can then be expected to include and exclude some social groups, that is each articulation of oppression will not be universal. Each exclusion can then be recognised as an oppression because the difficulties faced by the excluded are ignored. Any political movement based on a unified set of values thus becomes an oppressor, despite the fact that it is also struggling against its own oppression, and the left is confronted with conflicts between oppressed groups that dislocate its overall vision of liberation.

Value based politics provide the most obvious means of unifying the left because they found it on unified values. However, with the proliferation of anti-oppression struggles the consequences of a politics based on unified values is the fragmentation of the overall left struggle. The next section will explore whether the reverse is true and so whether a politics founded on creating difference can be the basis of a unified left.

Chapter Four: Difference as Desire: Deleuze and Guattari.

The Context.

Prior to the nineteen sixties the treatment of mental illness in France had been overwhelmingly based on psychiatric techniques that sought to identify and treat a physical basis for mental illnesses with scientific medicine. During the sixties this dominance was challenged both by psychoanalysis, particularly through Jacques Lacan's interpretation of Freud, and the antipsychiatric movement. These challenges received a boost from the events of May nineteen sixty-eight, when France seemed on the verge of a revolution, because the problems of daily life, and hence also mental life, were brought forcefully into the realm of the political.

[Turtle, 1978, chapters 1-3]

Gilles Deleuze was by nineteen sixty-eight known in France for commentaries on famous philosophers, such as Nietzsche and Spinoza, and for his own philosophy which explored the concept of difference. [Deleuze, 1962: Deleuze, 1968: Deleuze, 1969: Foucault, 1970: Bogue, 1989, 1-4: Massumi, 1992, 1-3] Felix Guattari was, by nineteen sixty-eight, a practising psychoanalyst influenced by Lacan and an antipsychiatry activist closely associated with the radical *La Borde* clinic for mental health. [Guattari, 1984: Turtle, 1978, 83 & 254

f/n 23: Bogue, 1989, 4-6: Massumi, 1992, 1-3: Stanton, 1992] Deleuze and Guattari brought together their expertise in difference and psychoanalysis after the May events and in nineteen seventy-two published their first joint work about capitalism and schizophrenia, the book Anti-Oedipus.

Sherry Turkle claims that Deleuze and Guattari's work emerged from three strands of the challenge to psychiatry in France. [Turkle, 1978, 83] The first was the interpretation of Freud developed by theorist and analyst Lacan. [Turkle, 1978, 146-148] The second was the antipsychiatric discourse on madness, which sought to loosen scientific medicine's hold on the treatment of mental illness and introduce therapies which diminished the separation of mental institution and society. [Turkle, 1978, 142-144 & 262 f/n 4] The third derived from Marxism and focused on the way that therapies for mental illness were pacifying the mentally ill so that structures which caused mental illness would not be challenged. [Turkle, 1978, 142-148: Bogue, 1989, 87] In addition, Bogue points out that Deleuze's previous work developing a philosophy of difference was an important contributor to the work Deleuze and Guattari would produce together. [Bogue, 1989, 2-4: Massumi, 1992, 1-3]

Emerging from this background Deleuze and Guattari collaborated on three books, Anti-Oedipus, Kafka and A

Thousand Plateaus, and in them attempted to create a new form of politics and philosophy based on difference. Unfortunately, Deleuze and Guattari pay a price for the novelty of their work in accessibility, particularly in their frequent coining of new terms. In order to provide a clear summary of their work an outline of their basic theory of desire will be followed by extended interpretations, in their terms, of the British dance music movement called Raving and the Italian political movement *Autonomia*. A summary of several more of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, which will complete an outline of their theory, will then be made on the basis of these examples. The interpolation of concrete examples and abstract reasoning will allow a flavour of Deleuze and Guattari's complexity to be combined with clarifications through tangible instances of those complexities. In turn, this analysis of a particular difference based theory will test the implication of the left's collective memory that anti-oppression politics can be based on difference.

Desire and Production.

Deleuze and Guattari develop a theory of desire as productive of difference. Desire, they argue, is made up of two forms. First, there are concrete constructions of desire, called in Anti-Oedipus desiring-machines and in A Thousand Plateaus assemblages, and second there is

desiring-production, which is the order or principle of desire. Deleuze and Guattari claim that desiring-production can only be understood by realising that:

"production is immediately consumption and a recording process (*enregistrement*), without any mediation, and the recording process and consumption directly determine production, though they do so within the production process. Hence everything is production" [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 4]

Desiring-production is the 'production of production', or put another way, the principle of desire is to be productive. For Deleuze and Guattari desire is neither good nor bad, sexual or non-sexual, but is productive. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 4-6 & 296: Patton, 1981, 41: Donzelot, 1972, 35: Bogue, 1989, 89-90]

Desiring-production is not, however, the existence of a desire, it is its order or principle. Desire only exists in a particular machine or assemblage that determines the nature of desiring-production in that instance. In short, desire and its productions are only brought into being when a particular assemblage or desiring-machine exists. Deleuze and Guattari wrote:

"Assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled desire." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 399]

Assemblages or desiring-machines are desiring-production made concrete, which means that desire achieves a certain reality in the specific productivity of an assemblage. Deleuze and Guattari claim that an assemblage is a sort of machine because it produces in a certain way and they stress this by arguing that the correct question to pose about an assemblage is not 'what does it mean' but 'how does it work'. In assemblages Deleuze and Guattari are concerned not with problems of meaning but 'solely problems of use'. Deleuze and Guattari thus created a functionalist conception of assemblages and desiring-machines because assemblages are recognised through the functions or the use of their parts. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 179]

Deleuze and Guattari answer the accusation of functionalism by distinguishing between the molecular and the molar. Desiring-machines or assemblages form the first connections or produce the first works, the molecular elements, which are necessary for larger, or molar, social machines to come into existence. For instance, the molecular connection of a child's mouth and a parent's food is a necessary basis for the family to become a molar social institution. Deleuze and Guattari claim they are immune to the standard critique of functionalism because their functionalism is at the level of molecular connections that make up social institutions and does not concern the institutions themselves. This

claim will be discussed in detail in a later section but at this stage the important point is the stress Deleuze and Guattari place on recognising desire by its functions. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 180-181]

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desire distinguishes the order of desire from the reality of desires. Desiring-production is the production of production and so is the order or the immanent principle of assemblages and desiring-machines. Put another way, the principle of desire is to produce and a particular form of production is an assemblage of desire. The particular form of production of an assemblage can itself be recognised through its functions, because Deleuze and Guattari claim that use, functioning and production are the one thing for an assemblage. A particular desire is a series of functions which make up an assemblage.

A third concept must now be added to desiring-production and assemblages in order to complete a basic 'deleuzoguattarian' perspective. [Bogue, 1989, 9] Deleuze and Guattari argue that for there to be assemblages there must be something that connects the product and production, something that is also non-production because it is the space where production occurs. Borrowing a phrase from Antonin Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari call this space the Body without Organs or BwO.

"The body without organs is nonproductive; nonetheless it is produced, at a certain place and a certain time in the connective synthesis, as the identity of producing and the product" [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 8]

Assemblages take the productive drive of desiring-production and realise themselves on the BwO because the BwO is the place where product and production are identified with each other. The BwO is where a particular assemblage realises its desire and is therefore also where production must be unconstrained, if production is to be the principle of a specific assemblage. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 9-16: Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 149-166: Bogue, 1989, 93-94] Deleuze and Guattari point out that the BwO is accordingly opposed to an organism that organises.

"The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 158]

An organisation involves blockages because it places organs in fixed relationships. In contrast, the BwO is where assemblages are productive and so is a plane where there is an unlimited and unblocked productivity of desire. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 154]

In summary, desiring-production demands the production of more and more assemblages, that is the creation of more and more desires, and the BwO is the plane where this immense productivity can occur. The three concepts of

desiring-production, assemblages or desiring-machines and the BwO which form Deleuze and Guattari's basic theory of desire have now been outlined. There is, of course, more to be said but some examples may be helpful at this stage.

The Rave-Machine

Raving is a constellation of music, drugs, youth, dancing, law evasion, fashion and money that existed in Britain from the mid nineteen eighties until, at least, the early nineteen nineties. The head of the 'pay party intelligence unit' of the police in the West Midlands, U.K. reported one thousand two hundred and twenty rave parties, some with up to fifteen thousand participants, in the West Midlands during the two years prior to April nineteen ninety-two. [Campbell, 1992]¹ Stereotypically raving consists of thousands of people dancing all night to a specific form of music, in a venue fitted with some form of lightshow with many people taking drugs, usually E (Ecstasy). E's effect is, reputedly, that of a mild hallucinogenic combined with the physical lift of an amphetamine, which makes it perfect for a course of all-night dancing to loud music because it provides both energy and an altered reality. [O'Hagen, 1988: Leith,

1 The specificity of raving as opposed to Acid House, or even just the dance scene in general, is too complicated a question to tackle for this example, however the existence of other closely related 'movements of the dance floor' needs to be acknowledged. [Redhead, 1990]

1991, 4: Foucault, 1970, 190-191] Shaun Ryder, lead singer of the band the Happy Mondays, noted the role of E when he listed his influences as:

"Northern soul...punk rock...Jimi Hendrix...Captain Beefheart. And a lot o'drugs on top of that. It was thru Bez [another member of the band] with E.. just get'em down yer throat, son ! More ! Go on ! Throw 'em down yer neck !...That's how we really got to see how E can get you, like, right out there."
[Shaun Ryder in Leith, 1991, 5]

Some of the key elements of raving are dance, lights, drugs, clothes, music, and time and the possible combinations of these elements in a particular rave-event created a sort of delirium so that people 'raved'. As people affected by drugs danced for hours beneath shifting patterns of light to powerful music, they gradually achieved a communal state of euphoria. What can be recognised as ravings production, or what is desired by ravers through constructing a rave-event, is this ongoing inducement into a desubjectified state of something like rapture. [Leith, 1991: Redhead, 1990]

Using Deleuze and Guattari's terms raving can be understood as a machine in which certain elements, such as a drug, a song, a volume or an intensity of light, can be connected to other such elements in order to produce the desired state of raving. The rave-machine's parts can thus be understood according to the work they do or their function in constructing the machine which realises a desire. For instance, one strand of the musical style of

raving is a cross between rock and dance music in which rock guitar lines are connected to dance rhythms. This part of rave music functioned by supplying an endless dance beat shot through with guitar riffs that accentuate and break up the sound. [Brown, 1989, 33: Redhead, 1990, 2]² This new style is both productive in itself, because it fuels the creation of more music in a new style, and when it is connected to other elements of the rave machine, such as drugs, lights or time, functions to create the collective state of raving. Journalist James Brown noted a similar creativity in relation to fashion.

"Wander through the dry ice banks that cloak the Hacienda and you'll see casual sports gear rubbing up against fishing hats and hooded tops. Tattooed legs, beatnik beards and pen-decorated flares bounce around in pastel coloured tuff leather shoes and high-rise baseball boots. Fashion has become a spectacular free-for-all." [Brown, 1989, 33]

When there is such a free-for-all Deleuze and Guattari's desire is present in the unrestrained creation of new differences and it can therefore be asked 'what is the BwO of raving?'. Remembering that the BwO is both 'desire and non-desire' because it is the place where the identification of producer and product occurs and also remembering that the BwO is itself produced, the BwO of

2 The connection of rock and dance musical styles was not originated in the musical style that became part of the Rave-machine, rather it can be traced back at least to early rap music in the mid nineteen seventies. It is also only one form of music that has contributed to rave musical styles, with at least one other style in the development of Acid House and techno-dance music. [Redhead, 1990, 2]

raving would be the collective bodies of ravers producing their collective delirium and ecstasy. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 149-150]

The BwO of raving is the undifferentiated state that supports the connections that the raving-machine makes between its different elements. This undifferentiated state is the collective body, itself made of bodies, produced by thousands of people jointly making the connections of drugs to dance, music to dance, dance to fashion, drugs to time, time to music and so on, thereby gradually constructing the state of raving and so the BwO of raving. The delirium is non-subjective and it is smooth, as all the connections and functions of the machine give way to intensities of feeling. Ravers may no longer notice the lights, the other ravers or the music as separate elements but feel them as the one intense event. This is a phenomenon that has been called the trance dance. [Redhead, 1990, 6]

In summary, desiring-production can be seen to have invested a rave-machine which seeks, through the connection of multifarious elements that are themselves multiple such as lights, dance, fashion, music, or drugs, to be productive and creative. This productivity constructs a non-productive plane, or BwO, which underpins the connections of the rave-machine and this non-productive plane is the body of ravers that a rave-

event, an actualisation of the rave-machine, can create. A collective body is the BwO of the rave-machine and the desubjectified state of ecstasy is a raver's desire.

Though the rave-machine has been outlined using Deleuze and Guattari's three main concepts it has been treated in isolation from its social context. To broaden this example clashes with at least two other social structures or institutions can be outlined.

First, in nineteen eighty-eight raves had to confront a combination of tabloid outrage and police action which sought to directly repress a seemingly free-wheeling multiplication of rave-events. An alarmist campaign from the tabloid press, which centred on the perilous use of drugs at raves, coincided with both repeated police operations to close rave-events and judicial attempts to criminalise raving by prosecuting rave organisers for allowing drugs to be sold at rave-events, whether such organisers were aware of the sales or not. [Redhead, 1990, 2-4: Wells, 1988]

Reaction to this assault on the rave-machine followed two paths. First, there is some evidence to suggest there was a reduction in the number of rave-events, which constituted a running down of the rave-machine that is difficult to disentangle from its possible demise as a fashion. [Wells, 1988, 24: Campbell, 1992: See comments

of DJ's in Wells, 1988, 24-25] Second, raves continued but became secret, being held in isolated places directions to which could only be obtained through informal networks, such as a friend or a telephone number, just before an event. A rave-event might then occur completely hidden from public view. However, if the police found out about and tried to prevent a secret event a night of ravers trying to find a way past police blocks ensued because ravers did not protests but simply sought to find their event without being caught. Little 'normal' political action to protect their machine seems to have been taken by ravers. For example, no-one organised a Committee to Defend Raving, conducted petitions or lobbied politicians. Ravers simply carried on trying to find more ingenious ways of fleeing the police, disappearing from public view and constructing their desiring-machine. [Rayner, 1992]

The second major confrontation for the rave-machine was with capitalism and this came about in two ways. First, there was a commercialisation of elements of the machine, with clothes and music being the most obvious examples, and this may have blocked the lines of creativity the machine ran along. For instance, the fashion free-for-all became codified into a recognisable, reproducible and manufacturable uniform, perhaps best represented by the 'Joe Bloggs' label. This is also a contradictory process, especially for successful musicians who may enter the

well defined and possibly financially rewarding economy of pop and rock music, and has its idealists who see commercial success as a means of spreading raving over the world. [Leith, 1991, 5]

Second, the drug economy that has been associated with raving seemed to become more violent, at least in Manchester. It is difficult to obtain clear information on this phenomenon and it is ripe for sensationalism, but Leith does seem to establish a rise in violence which affected raving. [Leith, 1991: Nevin, 1991] This can be symbolised by the closing of Manchester's famous nightclub the Hacienda, which reopened with extra security including a metal detector, because the owners felt they could not otherwise guarantee that fire-arms would not be taken into the club. [Leith, 1991, 5: Nevin, 1991, 6]

The deleuzoguattarian analysis of raving can be the basis for outlining more of their concepts, however before passing back directly to Deleuze and Guattari's work, a second example of a desiring-machine will be given through the Italian political movement called *Autonomia*. Once both these examples are established a solid basis for analysis of Deleuze and Guattari will have been established.

The Autonomia-Machine.³

It is often assumed that the political eruptions that occurred in Western countries during the nineteen sixties peaked late in that decade and died out by the mid-seventies. Italy would be an exception to any such pattern because though conflict reached great intensity in nineteen sixty-eight to sixty-nine, it then led to a second period of turmoil followed by a second climax in nineteen seventy-seven. By the time of this 'second phase' a movement developed which both carried some of the marks of Deleuze and Guattari's theories and explicitly used their work, though this does not mean that it was a movement carried out to their blueprint. [Bifo, 1980, 159; Collective A/Traverso, 1980] The movement seems to have been called simply that, *Il Movimento*, by its participants but has become known by

3 The nature of Autonomia is a matter of some debate, ranging from Melucci and Willan, who both define it as essentially a terrorist organisation and repeat the judiciary's nineteen seventy-nine claim that various leaders of Autonomia were also the organised head council of the terrorist Red Brigades, to the special edition of the journal Semiotext(e) which interprets Autonomia as a definition of the 'new post-political politics'. [Melucci, 1978: Willan, 1991, 183-190: Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980] Melucci and Willan are far too dismissive, reducing any involvement of Autonomia in politics to violence, while Semiotext(e) seems to interpret Autonomia as being too innovative. In general what follows is a 'sceptical semiotext(e)' line for two reasons; it allows a clear example for the purposes of illustrating Deleuze and Guattari's arguments and it appears to be the most accurate summary from the material that is available in English. However, it must be recognised that this interpretation may overestimate the anti-Leninism and political novelty of Autonomia. [Lumley, 1980]

one of its guiding threads, Autonomy or in Italian *Autonomia*.

Italian politics since the second world war can be seen largely as a confrontation between communism and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and catholicism and the Christian Democratic Party (DC). This opposition began to break down in the sixties as agitation culminated in intense political activity by both right, in the 'strategy of tension', and left, in a growing disillusionment with the PCI and its official unions. [Bale, 1989, 5-8: Bifo, 1979, 148-152: Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980, 16-17: Morris, 1978, 61-62: Willan, 1991]

The 'strategy of tension' was a response by the right to both the struggles of workers and leftists and a growing economic crisis. It essentially involved committing terrorist acts which the left could be accused of perpetrating and which could then be used as the pretext for introducing repressive measures, for creating the pre-conditions for a military coup and for discrediting the left. [Willan, 1991] For example, four bombs were set off on the twelfth of December nineteen sixty-nine in Milan and Rome, of which the most serious was in a bank in Milan where sixteen people were killed and over eighty wounded. Immediately after the blast the Milan police commissioner blamed anarchists. Several anarchists were soon arrested, charged and later convicted and a

crackdown against the local anarchist movement was conducted. It was not until seven years later that thirty-four neo-fascists and members of the security forces were revealed as the perpetrators of the bombing and were charged with the crime, with only three of the thirty-four actually being arrested. [Willan, 1991, 122-131: Bale, 1989, 5-6: Bifo, 1979, 150: CARI, 1980, 174] The 'strategy of tension' was an ambiguous success because, though it did not completely destroy the left, by the late nineteen seventies it had helped to make it impossible for the PCI to share power in an elected government, despite compromises made by the PCI in response to the sense of a social and economic crisis.

While the strategy of tension was underway an austerity programme, made up of wage cuts, reduction of absenteeism, greater productivity through harder work and other elements, had been instituted by the DC government in the late sixties. This programme was heightened by increased austerity measures prompted by the Oil Shock of nineteen seventy-three and a consequent deterioration in the Italian economy. Under these economic pressures the PCI entered into a 'Historic Compromise' with the Christian Democrats in which, by abstaining from voting, they allowed the DC to govern. A programme of restructuring industry and reducing public expenditure, often by massive increases in the price of public services, resulted from this compromise and deepened a

developing belief that the PCI was failing to represent the interests of the workers and the dispossessed.

[Morris, 1978, 51-58: Censor, 1975: Lumley, 1990, chapter 1: Bologna, 1977, 48-50: Cherki and Wieviorka, 1980]

As part of the growing disillusionment with the PCI several leftist groups independent of the PCI, such as *Lotta Continua* (the Struggle Continues) and *Potere Operaio* (Workers Power), were set up in the late sixties. These groups organised both in and beyond the factories and conducted a radical critique of work, drawing on Mario Tronti's analysis of the 'refusal of work'. [Bifo, 1979, 150-151: Melucci, 1978a, 101-102, footnote: Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980, 17: Lumley, 1980]

Tronti argued that work itself should and could be refused under capitalism, that workers should not seek to run capitalism 'better' and that this refusal is both the dividing line between reformist and revolutionary political activity and a political action that can lead to fundamental change. These ideas, developed by Tronti and others during the sixties, then contributed to the development of the concept of autonomy. [Tronti, 1965, 28-35: Moulner, 1989]

Autonomy developed as a two sided concept. First, it asserted the right of workers to organise autonomously outside their unions or the PCI. This followed the

acceptance of Tronti's assertion of the right to refuse work combined with the PCI's support for right-wing austerity measures which demanded that labourers work harder. Second, autonomy developed from the claims of non-class based movements that emerged through the sixties and seventies, such as the women's and the youth movement, which aimed for autonomous control of their own lives. Here the refusal of work coincided with the need to reclaim lives that were being lost to the family or the University as well as the factory. Overall, autonomy influenced a political movement to develop social spaces that were autonomous from the various oppressive power structures of society. [Tronti, 1965, 28-35: Moulier, 1989: Bologna, 1977: Magale, 1980]

Autonomia emerged in the early seventies to become a new form of political movement which had no central structure, no one newspaper and no set of elected leaders. In fact, Autonomia appeared not to be a formal organisation at all. Rather:

"the PCI has found itself increasingly confronted with a vocal and/or violent left opposition loosely known as The Movement, *il movimento*. This movement has a constantly shifting and sliding identity, appearing unnervingly undefinable in a country used to the definite policies, hierarchical structure and orchestrated moments of change in the Catholic Church on the one hand, and the Communist Party on the other." [Morris, 1978, 53]

Morris identified three strands to Autonomia which she called the semiological delinquents, the autonomous

workers and the armed struggle. Though it will be argued that the armed struggle actually runs counter to Autonomia, Morris's definition of the other two strands is useful. [Morris, 1978, 52-54]

Morris argued that the semiological delinquents, which she also calls the creative wing, was made up of those seeking to transform everyday life. This strand was often drawn from those being excluded from industrial restructuring, such as students, the unemployed, partly employed or black market workers, was heavily influenced by both the feminist movement and health and safety issues at work and made its chief concern the 'reconquest of personal life' through autonomy. Examples of action by these groups were the network of pirate radio stations that developed with the deregulation of Italian radio and the autoreduction campaigns, which organised collective action to 'self-reduce' the price of goods. [Morris, 1978, 53-58; Bologna, 1977; Torealta, 1980; Collective A/Traverso, 1980; Guattari, 1984, 236-241; Cherki and Wieviorka, 1980]

Second, Morris identified the autonomous workers groups who had revolted against the results of the Historic Compromise as part of Autonomia. As already noted these groups were often set up in the late sixties in opposition to the PCI and developed both the tradition of autonomy and Tronti's ideas of the refusal of work. As a

consequence, in some industrial disputes union's controlled by political parties were bypassed by these workers. For example, workers in a dispute in Porto Marghera seemed to take more notice of students and Potere Operaio than their Union and demanded a flat 5,000 *lire* increase for all, rather than union negotiated changes in production bonuses. [Lumley, 1990, 174]

Last, Morris points to groups that resorted to the armed struggle. Chiefly there was the *Red Brigades*, whose beginnings dated back to violent actions in factories in the late sixties, but there were also completely new groups like *Nuclei Armati Proletari*(NAP). Morris makes these a strand of Autonomia and it is certain that terrorist actions were integral to the political landscape in which Autonomia moved. However, though drawing distinct boundaries around Autonomia is difficult terrorism should probably not be considered an integral part of Autonomia itself. First, there was an ongoing rejection both of the Brigades and any belief in clandestine armed struggle by the theoreticians and media associated with Autonomia. There was also a similar rejection of Autonomia by the proponents of armed struggle, which included at times barely veiled threats from the Red Brigades. [Curcio, 1979] Second, the confusion of groups conducting an armed struggle and Autonomia can also be traced to two sources. Autonomia does not, in general, reject violence, or even armed

violence, but rather the attempt of a clandestine armed group to claim leadership of the workers' movement, that is it rejects the militarization of a mass movement. Further, the Italian state in the late seventies went to great lengths to associate Autonomia with the Red Brigades. Through Autonomia's own acceptance of violence and the efforts of the Italian state it is easy to confuse Autonomia with the clandestine violence of terrorist groups. Consequently, while the Brigades and other groups committed to a clandestine, militarised struggle are an important part of the politics in which Autonomia was involved, it seems appropriate to reject Morris' characterisation of them as the 'third stream' of Autonomia. [Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980a, Section 4: Beyond Terrorism: Morris, 1978, 70-73]⁴

To develop a deleuzoguattarian analyse of Autonomia its BwO needs to be outlined. Paul Patton noted that a BwO is:

"the ideal limit of a process of desire, one that has attained the complete deterritorialization of

4 There was at least one terrorist group, *Prima Linea*, that grew out of anti-leninist and anti-authoritarian groups like those making up Autonomia. However, it is only to the extent that this group retained the character of an open organisation, not easy for a clandestine terrorist group, that it can be seen as part of Autonomia. How far this was achieved is impossible to judge on present information. [Moulier, 1989, 31: Lumley, 1991, 292, note 3] For an opposing viewpoint that identifies Autonomia with both the Red Brigades and terrorism in general see Willan, 1991, 182-3 and for a criticism of Willan see O'Hara, 1992.

the body, removing all traces of its character as an organism; but also that pure surface of intensity which is the ideal point of departure and the essential precondition for any process of desire." [Patton, 1986, 24]

Autonomy preceded the Autonomia-assemblage both theoretically, being a field of debate in Italian political journals in the sixties, and practically, in the worker, student and social struggles of the sixties. Autonomy could thus be Autonomia's point of departure. Desiring-production in the Autonomia-machine then invested autonomy through the gradual construction of the assemblage which could realise this desire for autonomy. Autonomy, as a BwO, engendered a politics which rejected the constraints of the Italian political organism in order to create autonomous social spaces. That is, the institutions of the Italian political organism, such as the parties, the police, the newspapers and media, were removed to create social spaces where autonomy could be lived. If autonomy was the desire, then its BwO was these autonomous spaces which support the living of a life free from the police, teachers, the family and all other oppressive institutions of the Italian political organism. [Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980b, 8-10: Lumley, 1990, 34-45, ch.16 & 17: Bifo, 1980, 149-152]

For example, the development of autonomous space was aided by the pirate radio stations which offered information, exploration and organisation. They did this by producing autonomy through discussions of the refusal

of work and the rediscovery of control of one's person, through the broadcast direct to air of phone calls from a demonstration which offered information of police and demonstrator movements or through the instant communication of the decisions of organisations. One participant, Bifo, noted that:

"Through this channel [the pirate radios] circulated an uninterrupted flood of music and words, a flood of transformations on the symbolic, perceptive and imaginative planes." [Bifo, 1980, 156]

The Autonomia-assemblage grew by constituting its BwO throughout the seventies and reached a peak in nineteen seventy-seven. In February of that year the wounding by fascists of a student who was protesting against DC reforms led to the occupation of several Universities, first in Rome but then in Palermo, Naples, Florence, Torino and Bologna. These were not occupations just by students but included the fractions of society that had been thrown up in the seventies, such as the unemployed, partly employed, women and so on. The slogan was 'all work for less time' and the multiply articulated program was:

"We want to make possible a general reduction in working time and we want to transform the organisation of work in such a way that an autonomous organisation of productive experimental organisation may become possible." [Bifo, 1980, 158]

March saw street battles in Rome and Bologna and the state's grip on both cities seemed to be weakening. The PCI's failure to control revolt in Bologna, where it had run the local government for many years, set this revolt especially outside the control of the Italian political organism as it placed it beyond the left-wing of that organism. Repression then followed with hundreds of arrests, the closing of radio stations, newspapers, bookstores and other avenues of political activity, increased violence from police and a storm of accusations from the mass media. The battle continued throughout the summer and in September a convention, called by Autonomia in Bologna with the aim of advancing the movement, was attended by seventy thousand people. [Bifo, 1980, 157-160: Lumley, 1990, chapter 20: Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980a: Morris, 1978] However, the repression had had its effect and the continued production of the Autonomia-assemblage, the realisation of autonomy, was being blocked and replaced with reactions to the repression. Bifo wrote that:

"The September Convention was the great opportunity-missed however- for the Movement to overcome its purely negative, destructive connotations, and formulate a programmatic position for the autonomous organisation of a real society against the State, an autonomous organisation of social intellectual, and productive energies that might make possible a progressive liberation of lives from salaried work....the gathering concluded without producing any direction for the future, any new program, and without advancing the Movement. Instead it was restricted to hearing tales of repression and then defining, in negative terms, its reaction." [Bifo, 1980, 159-160]

According to Bifo Autonomia had become ensnared in the repression operated by the Italian state and so had become a reactive rather than an active movement. No longer creating new and different political possibilities, Autonomia was drawn into politics that were increasingly defined by the state and so the creativity and productivity of Autonomia were blocked. [Bifo, 1980, 157-160: Lumley, 1990, chapter 20: Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980: Morris, 1978, 63-69]

The peak of struggle passed for Autonomia but actions continued with the clandestine armed struggle moving to centre stage. In particular, after the kidnapping and assassination in nineteen seventy-eight of Aldo Moro, who was president of the DC and one of the architects of the Historic Compromise, further repression was launched. As part of this wave of repression around sixty influential intellectual and organisational members of Autonomia were jailed in April nineteen seventy-nine for being the controlling council of the Red Brigades. Many of the charges seemed to have little evidential support and the investigations sometimes took the form of inquisitorial analyses of the writings and thought of Autonomists, in this way directly criminalising Autonomia's intellectual basis. Many of the accused were held on remand for years and then were acquitted or released for lack of evidence, though some were convicted and jailed. [Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980a, see Part 3: April 7 Arrests: Moulrier,

1989, 37-38, note 21: Moss, 1989, chapters 5 & 6:
 Jamieson, 1989, 176-178: Bifo, 1980, 158-160: O'Hara,
 1992]

The example of the Autonomia-assemblage and its BwO will be left here, in its decline. At its highest point Autonomia seemed on the verge of tearing the Italian political organism to pieces and substituting the productivity and multiplicity of a desire for autonomy on all social levels. At its most threatening Autonomia seemed to be creating liberation as Deleuze and Guattari understood it when they wrote:

"what belongs to all requirements of liberation: the force of the unconscious itself, the investment by desire of the social field, the disinvestment of repressive structures." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 61]

The Theory of Lines.

Only Deleuze and Guattari's central concepts of desiring-production, assemblages and the BwO have so far been examined. Other important ideas, such as the war-machine or lines of flight, have been put to one side to offer the theory of desire as clearly as possible and then to explore that theory through examples. Before passing to criticism of their work it will now be useful to return directly to Deleuze and Guattari and examine several additional concepts.

Deleuze and Guattari analyse assemblages or desiring-machines by examining the 'bundles of three sorts of lines' that can make them up and, though this is not the only way they analyse assemblages, their 'theory of lines' shows most clearly what is revolutionary or liberating in their interpretation of desire. In the theory of lines there are three main concepts; molar lines, molecular lines and lines of flight. [Bogue, 1989, 124]

Molar lines are rigid and segmentary and they stop any free flows of creativity or productivity by forcing them into categories. An example is the Rave-machine's confrontation with the molar line of successive stages of pursuit, capture, incarceration and trial used by the police-judicial apparatus. Each segment of this judicial line is predetermined to lead to the next, leaving no space for creativity once a raver is ensnared by it. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 202-207; Patton, 1986, 25]

Molecular lines are less rigid and less segmentary than molar lines, but they still follow a determinate path. For instance, the personal alliances that may be formed among people in a large bureaucracy may be as important a basis for action as the rigid hierarchy, even though such alliances are more fluid and less rigid than the formal hierarchy. Another example is that finding out about a secret rave-event was often a matter of being at another

event where information was available. The connection was therefore more fluid than a molecular line but also had to be made in a particular way to be successful. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 202-207; Patton, 1986, 25]

Last, there are the lines of flight. By constructing these lines an escape from segmentarity can be made and a pure flow of productivity created. These are the lines of liberation. Lines of flight run where a system of molar and molecular lines break down or where something new can come into effect. Deleuze and Guattari also call them 'lines of deterritorialization' because a line of flight breaks a territory from its boundaries. For example, the music of rock and dance each had their own territory in which formulas were well defined for producing what was distinctly rock and distinctly dance music. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms there were molar and molecular lines of rock, in guitar riffs, and dance, in bass-heavy rhythms. However, in the Rave-machine some of these lines of rock and dance were deterritorialised and brought together to form a productive line of flight from rock and dance which fed music into the Rave-machine. A second example of a line of flight occurred when ravers, in reaction to police attempts to prevent raves, could be found late at night drawing new routes on the British landscape according to secret maps to a rave. When confronted by a police road-block ravers would turn and simply try to draw a new line through a new route to the

rave. Rather than trying to organise a protest within the state system ravers answered the police's molar lines with creativity and flight. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 202-207 & 508-510: Patton, 1986, 25: Guattari, 1984, 236-241: Rayner, 1992]

There are, then, three sorts of lines that make up assemblages. Yet, this means that assemblages are not necessarily free embodiments of desire, for they may be crossed by molar and molecular lines that segment and block. It has already been noted that the rave-machine was confronted by an assemblage made up of the police and the judicial system and that Autonomia was met by the Italian state. Deleuze and Guattari must, therefore, distinguish the machine that invents lines of flight. They call it the war-machine.

War-Machine and State: Smooth and Striated Space.

The war-machine is not a machine for waging military war, despite its name, but is the abstract form of assemblages that create lines of flight. The war-machine wages war on molar and molecular lines. As such the war-machine is a machine dedicated to mutations, changes, productions and creativity and its aim is the formation of lines that deterritorialise. So, to the extent that the Rave-machine and the Autonomia-machine were able to construct lines of flight they were also war-machines. Deleuze and Guattari

claim that the war-machine exists in opposition to the state or, in their terms, the state-form. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, Plateau 12: Patton, 1984: Patton, 1986]

"The State-form, as a form of interiority, has a tendency to reproduce itself, remaining identical to itself across its variations and easily recognisable within the limits of its poles, always seeking public recognition (there is no masked State). But the war machine's form of exteriority is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses; it exists in an industrial innovation as well as in technological invention, in a commercial circuit as well as in a religious creation, in all flows and currents that only secondarily allow themselves to be appropriated by the State." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 360]

According to Deleuze and Guattari the state-form operates by capturing lines of flight and constructing an 'interiority', or interior territory, where individuals and groups are fixed in certain positions. The state's relations to whatever is external to it, that is the state's relations to anything that is not already territorialised, are therefore those of capture and bondage. The state-form is associated with 'striated and sedentary space', which is the space across which molar and molecular lines run, which ensnare and control creativity and productivity, and striated space gives rise to a 'plane of organisation' which forms the basis for an organism. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, Plateau 13: Patton, 1986]

In opposition to striated space Deleuze and Guattari claim there is 'smooth space', where the free-flowing

lines of flight run and so this is the space that the war-machine constructs. Smooth space has no blocks to creativity and Deleuze and Guattari associate it with nomads who cross space not to travel from point to point but because the line on which they travel is their object. Smooth space constitutes a 'plane of consistency', where there are no blocks, and hence makes up a BwO. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 70-73 & 422-423]

The two forms of space, smooth and striated, are not mutually exclusive. As has already been noted, the state-form seeks to capture lines of flight and construct molar lines and the war-machine seeks flight from striated space. Consequently, the two forms of space are continually turning into each other and these inter-relations form politics. Examples of this politics have so far been given in the contest between the creativity of the Rave-machine and the territorialisations of the tabloid press and the police and between the productivity of Autonomia and the actions of the Italian state.

[Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, Plateau 14: Patton, 1986]

In summary, Deleuze and Guattari have produced a theory that is wide in scope and ambitious in its attempt to base desire, and ultimately liberation, on the continual production of difference. All the strange devices of desiring-production, assemblages, BwO, the theory of lines and the war-machine are dedicated to producing an

uncompromising theory of a revolutionary, difference-based desire. It is their commitment to difference and creativity that makes Deleuze and Guattari important for this thesis because analysis of their work should offer insight into a politics totally committed to difference, a politics which has been called a postmodern ethics.

[Patton, 1986]

Functionalism.

The single-mindedness of Deleuze and Guattari in realising a theory of difference is reflected in the tight connections between the terms of their analysis. These terms, such as production, functioning and creativity, are connected within the theory of desire, and from them is derived all the additional apparatus of flows, breaks and territorialisations. However, it can also be argued that the tightness of these connections also makes their theory functionalist. As already noted Deleuze and Guattari take note of their own functionalism. This is clear when they wrote:

"It has often been said and demonstrated that an institution cannot be explained by its use, any more than an organ can. Biological formations and social formations are not formed in the same way in which they function. Nor is there a biological, sociological, linguistic, etc., functionalism of large determinate aggregates (*des grands ensembles spécifiques*). But the same does not hold true in the case of desiring-machines as molecular elements: there, use, functioning, production, and formation are one and the same process. And it is this synthesis of desire that, under certain determinate

conditions, explains the molar aggregates (*les ensembles molaires*) with their specific use in a biological, social, or linguistic field. This is because the large molar machines presuppose pre-established connections that are not explained by their functioning, since the latter results from them. Only desiring-machines produce connections according to which they function, and function by improvising and forming the connections." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 180-181]

For Deleuze and Guattari the theory of desire consists, at its heart, of the realisation of 'desiring-production' in specific desiring-machines or assemblages. A particular desire can therefore be identified through the assemblage that produces it. Deleuze and Guattari also argue that for assemblages use, functioning and production are all the same thing, their mode of work, and so for Deleuze and Guattari the central question is 'how does it work', not 'what does it mean'. As Frank remarks their work accordingly results in a "vision of total functioning". [Frank, 1983, 167: Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 180-181 & 287-288: Donzelot, 1972]

Deleuze and Guattari recognise that functionalism is inadequate for understanding 'large determinate aggregates' however they exempt the molecular from this failure because the molecular is the realm of lines of flight and of creativity. But this amounts to ignoring whether functionalism is a valid theory or not because it is a necessary corollary of desiring-production. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 180-181] Rather than introducing some consistency between their rejection of functionalism in

general and their endorsement of a functionalist theory of desire, Deleuze and Guattari seem content to simply announce that desire is functionalist and then to deflect the accusation of functionalism by confining it to the molecular level.

Deleuze and Guattari need to accept functionalism because, logically, once they have bound functioning and production together as the same thing if they then reject functionalism they would have no other choice than to also abandon their theory of desire as productive. For Deleuze and Guattari desire incessantly makes new things and its nature is thus totally encompassed by a process of creativity and production. There is consequently no way for Deleuze and Guattari to recognise manifestations of desire, that is to recognise assemblages or lines of flight, except by what they do or by their functions because that is all assemblages are. For instance the analysis of pirate radio as a line of flight in the Autonomia-machine must focus on how the stations function as part of the movement. Consequently, it is noted they are an open forum for ideas, a communication channel for meetings or a means of organising demonstrations. Questions concerning the meaning of these activities are irrelevant.

Deleuze and Guattari's functionalism has been largely ignored in analyses of their work. However, Alberto

Melucci touches on it indirectly in his criticism of theories of 'marginality' and Autonomia.

Melucci has little sympathy with Autonomia or its theorists because at a practical level he sees a strong link with terrorism and at a theoretical level he finds them functionalist. [Melucci, 1978a, 101-103 & 114-115] He claims that theorists of Autonomia have adopted marginality and deviance as the chief categories of their politics. He notes that such an analysis moves 'wildcat' actions to the centre of attention as the paradigm of new forms of struggle. Homages to Marxism usually accompany these analyses but, Melucci claims, as a fig leaf to cover an 'extremist functionalism':

"Marginality and deviance are concepts that make sense only in a theoretical framework that assumes consensus to be the condition of integration of the system, and avoids problems of power, of conflict, and of class relations." [Melucci, 1978a, 101]

Melucci notes the glorification by some leftists of a riot led by fascists in Reggio Calabria as an example of the inability of a functionalist analysis of deviance to identify progressive struggles from just any form of struggle. The functioning of a riot, that is the events that make up a riot, is the same whether it is led by left or right and so issues of this particular riot's meaning were ignored by some leftists even though it was lead by neo-fascists. [Melucci, 1978a, 103] Melucci counterposes to functionalism the need to rediscover the

antagonistic conflicts of Italian society by reanalysing 'the mode of production of society' in order to identify the new conflicts over control of production.

Melucci's criticisms are undoubtedly mistaken in relation to several theoreticians of Autonomia, who have in fact undertaken the analyses he recommends. [Bologna, 1977: Bifo, 1980: Negri, 1978: Negri, 1989] However, his criticisms seem appropriate to Deleuze and Guattari on two grounds, functionalism, as has already been discussed, and the failure to be able to identify 'good' struggles from 'bad'.

Good and Bad Politics.

The second criticism of Deleuze and Guattari is that their theory cannot differentiate 'good' and 'bad' forms of politics. Deleuze's analysis of the logic used by the investigating judges in Autonomist Toni Negri's trial is emblematic of this.

Negri was one of the group of leading activists and theoreticians of Autonomia who were arrested in nineteen seventy-nine and accused of being the controlling council of the Red Brigades. He was specifically accused of phoning Aldo Moro's family on behalf of the Brigades after Moro was kidnapped and of armed insurrection

against the state.⁵ A month after Negri's arrest Deleuze wrote an open letter to his judges, which was published in the newspaper *La Repubblica*, and in which he raised "two principles that vitally concern all responsible democrats." [Deleuze, 1979, 182]

The first principle was that in a trial both the accused and the substance of the charge must be identified clearly and the content of the charge must be non-contradictory. Deleuze argued that charges should therefore 'contain a minimum of identifiable consistency and must not be vague or general' and that this principle had been broken in Negri's case. For example, the committal warrant recapitulated the events of the Moro kidnapping, at which Negri was not accused of being present, and invoked Negri's writings and ideas. Deleuze argued that warrant therefore "leaps from ideas to whatever events suit the prosecution case". [Deleuze, 1979, 183]

Deleuze's second principle was that committal hearings must conform to a certain principle of disjunction and exclusion, so that either A or B can be true, if B then

5 Negri was eventually jailed for 30 years, reduced to 12 on appeal, for 'armed insurrection against the State' with the charge of direct complicity in Moro's kidnapping and death dropped. He was released when elected as a Radical candidate for Parliament and fled to exile in France when it appeared he would be re-arrested after further accusations. [Moulier, 1989, 37-38, note 21: Willan, 1991, 182-190: O'Hara, 1992]

not-A and so on. This principle was also broken by the judges because they prevented contradictory elements from cancelling each other out and instead allowed them to accumulate. For example, it was thought that the phone call to Moro's family from the Brigades was made from Rome, but if Negri was in Paris when the call was made then Negri is not exonerated but the origin of the call is switched to Paris. [Deleuze, 1979, 183]

Deleuze's criticisms certainly seem relevant to any responsible democrat, however the judges behaviour also seems full of desiring-production because they allow no block to stop their flow of accusatory creativity. If Negri is in Paris and the call is from Rome then the judges seem to say 'so what' and these alternatives are merely accumulated in the desire to make the judicial-machine produce the desired conviction. It is not that Deleuze's criticisms are misguided because if anyone should be committed to the principles of a democratic judiciary investigating judges in a democracy should be and Deleuze is therefore pointing out contradictions in their commitments and not necessarily in his own. The problem for Deleuze and Guattari's work is simply that what appears to be genuinely creative behaviour, of the sort declared by them to be inherently liberatory, is clearly unpalatable and there seems little in their theory to support such a distaste. After all it is Deleuze and Guattari who recommend taking an existing

molar line and making it flow and Negri's judges seemed to be making the segmented and pre-defined codes of the judiciary flow in new and creative ways. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 379-380]

A similar problem is posed by Sylvere Lotringer and Chris Marazzi who recognised a deleuzoguattarian attitude in the functioning of the whole of the Italian state in its attitude to Autonomia:

The Italian State has moved onto its adversary's territory; it has *simulated* the fluidity characteristic of Autonomy. A 'pilot' decision rendered September 21, 1979, in the trial of Luigi Rosati, ex-husband of the Brigadist Adriana Ferrand and ideologue of *Autonomia Operaio*, described Autonomy as 'an indefinable mixture of groups and varied tendencies, a veritable mosaic made of different fragments, a gallery of overlapping images, of circles and collectives without any central organisation.' This definition echoes in every respect the logic deployed by the prosecution against Autonomy" [Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980a, 18-19]

Lotringer and Marazzi go on to point out that the state was not the same as Autonomy because the state became a desiring-machine only in order to grasp another desiring-machine, Autonomia itself, and to reinscribe Autonomia within state logic, by making it coincide with the Red Brigades. The state would in this way block Autonomia's creativity. Lotringer and Marazzi wrote:

"The logical delirium of the State projects the mosaic of Autonomy upon the rigid screen of the Red Brigades." [Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980a, 20]

Lotringer and Marazzi argue that the state apes Autonomia and turns itself into a desiring-machine in order to take hold of Autonomia and force it to coincide with the Red Brigades. Once this is achieved by, for example, accusing Negri of being a member of the controlling council of the Brigades, then the state can block Autonomia and dismantle it as a desiring-machine by, for example, imprisoning Negri. Lotringer and Marazzi therefore distinguish the politically correct creativity of Autonomia from the politically incorrect creativity of the state by arguing that the state's creativity aimed to create blockages while Autonomia's sought greater productivity.

Deleuze and Guattari directly address the possibility of lines of flight being set in motion by the state and they develop a similar position to Lotringer and Marazzi. Deleuze and Guattari claim the state is able to become a war-machine and to create lines of flight, but only in order to turn those lines of flight into molar lines and weave more striated space. The state can thus produce genuinely creative lines of flight but only in order to weave them into blockages. For example, Negri's judges only functioned creatively in order to block him through imprisonment. The striated space of the judicial system flowed but only in order to weave molar lines around a creative thinker.[Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 351-380]

However, this means that Deleuze and Guattari differentiate lines of flight created by the state from those created by the war-machine because state lines of flight are made to stop being lines of flight. In effect, Deleuze and Guattari differentiate state from non-state lines of flight when state lines are no longer lines of flight but this still leaves the difficulty of lines of flight created by the state before these lines become blocked. Deleuze and Guattari offer no means of rejecting these state lines of flight and therefore have problems in defining politically 'good' and 'bad' lines of flight. They consequently have no theoretical basis for rejecting the judge's behaviour in Negri's case or the state's behaviour as identified by Lotringer and Marazzi as long as this behaviour remains creative. To be consistent it appears that Deleuze and Guattari should applaud the judge's creativity in obtaining a conviction but condemn the transformation to imprisonment. [Hans, 1981, 62-63]

The problem of distinguishing 'good' from 'bad' politics is repeated by Deleuze and Guattari in their analysis of capitalism. They argue that for capitalism to be realised:

"there must be a whole *integral of decoded flows*, a whole *generalized conjunction* that overflows and overturns the preceding apparatuses...Circulation constitutes capital as a subjectivity commensurate with society in its entirety. But this new social subjectivity can form only to the extent that the decoded flows overflow their conjunctions and attain a level of decoding that the State

apparatuses are no longer able to reclaim: *on the one hand*, the flow of labour must no longer be determined as slavery or serfdom but must become naked and free labour; and *on the other hand*, wealth must no longer be determined as money dealing, merchant's or landed wealth, but must become pure homogenous and independent capital." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 452]

For Deleuze and Guattari capitalism is set in flow by a twin deterritorialisation which creates the two lines of flight of labour and money. However, capitalism does not stay as a pure deterritorialisation and instead constitutes a 'general axiomatic of decoded flows'. That is, the two lines of flight are recoded by the nation-state, which intervenes to realise specific instances of labour and money and so make up a particular axiomatic. Deleuze and Guattari argue that for capitalism to be realised in any particular instance it must have its two free flows, labour and money, recoded by the state, even though this may lead to further deterritorialisations on the part of capital, for example in multinational corporations which seek to evade the control of nation-states. Deleuze and Guattari call the 'deepest law' of capitalism that "it continually sets and then repels its own limits, but in doing so gives rise to numerous flows in all directions that escape its axiomatic." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 472 & 452-473] Or, as they put it in *Anti-Oedipus*:

"One sometimes has the impression that the flows of capital would willingly despatch themselves to the moon if the capitalist State were not there to bring them back to earth." [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 258]

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of capitalism is remarkably close to Lenin's in its positing of the state as the executive branch of capitalism that promotes capitalism but must also, at times, contest its excesses in order to prevent its self-destruction. In addition, if the reterritorialisations are carried out by the state and capitalism continually seeks to evade these territorialisations in order to flow, then Deleuze and Guattari seem logically committed to a state-less capitalism because they consider free flows of productivity to be liberatory. This would make Deleuze and Guattari's economic politics akin to monetarism because a capitalism unencumbered by the state can be expected to go to the moon in search of greater creativity.

To the extent that capitalism creates lines of flight, and Deleuze and Guattari certainly argue that it can do that, capitalism carries out their revolutionary political programme because, for Deleuze and Guattari, the making real of desiring-production through deterritorialisations and lines of flight is the revolutionary process. [Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, 341 & 379-381] Jean Baudrillard has also noted the similarity between capitalism and the demand to continually produce difference. He wrote:

"This constraint of liquidity, of flow, of the accelerated circulation of the psychic, the sexual

and of bodies, is the exact replica of what governs commodity value; capital must circulate, it must no longer have gravity or any fixed point"
[Baudrillard, 1977, 195]

It seems clear that Deleuze and Guattari have no means of distinguishing 'good' from 'bad' forms of creativity, either in relation to Negri's judges, the Italian state or capitalism. This shortcoming stems from their complete allegiance to the creation of difference, which excludes allegiance to any political values but the creation of difference. For Deleuze and Guattari all that matters is whether a line of flight can be created, not what that line might mean and so the allegiance to creativity overtakes all other considerations.

The Indifference of Difference.

The left's collective memory pointed to the possibility of a left based on the affirmation of many different oppressions and Deleuze and Guattari have been investigated in detail because they can be interpreted as an example of such a theory of liberation. However, two serious problems have emerged. The first is functionalism and the second is an inability to differentiate politics except through the creation of difference.

The second problem is particularly important because it not only allows capitalism and certain operations of the state to be considered revolutionary, but it also implies

that all the different forms of post-sixties anti-oppression movements should be judged by the one standard of difference creation. That is, if being revolutionary is defined by a politic's ability to create lines of flight, then only that ability to produce difference is fundamentally politically relevant. Paradoxically, Deleuze and Guattari develop a politics that is unconcerned with differences between anti-oppression movements except in relation to their ability to produce difference. Difference in Deleuze and Guattari leads to indifference.

The general significance of the problems of functionalism and political indifference for theories of difference will be considered in chapter six. However, before that an investigation of a second theory of difference, that of Lyotard's, will be undertaken. It will accordingly be possible to see if Lyotard's theory is more successful than Deleuze and Guattari's and so avoids the pit-falls of functionalism and an indifference to everything but the creation of difference.

Chapter Five: A Logic of Difference; Jean-Francois Lyotard.

Lyotard's History and the Left's History.

Jean-Francois Lyotard's intellectual and political career mirrors the left's collective memory because it passes from an allegiance to Marxism to an exploration of post-Marxist liberatory politics. Lyotard's commitment to Marxism was made in the early nineteen fifties, when he taught in Algeria and witnessed the Algerian struggle for independence. In 1954, back in France, he joined the group *Socialisme ou Barbarie* whose Marxism was already questioning the dominant Leninist and Trotskyist interpretations of Marx. In 1964 *Socialisme ou Barbarie* split over a set of theses which asked whether Marx's analysis of capitalism had become irrelevant to a changed world. Lyotard, despite his affinities for the theses, joined the more traditional Marxist off-shoot of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* called *Pouvoir Ouvrier*. However, in 1966 he resigned from *Pouvoir Ouvrier* and began a reassessment of Marxism and his own thought prompted, he later wrote, by the question:

"What if Marxism itself were in its turn one of those particular universals which it was not even a question of going beyond...but which it was at the time at least a question of refuting in its claim to absolute universality, all the while according it a value in its own order ?" [Lyotard, 1982a, 50]

Lyotard's reassessment of his thought was then fuelled by the insurrectionary events of May nineteen sixty-eight in France and accelerated by the subsequent emergence of different forms of anti-oppression struggles. His post-sixty eight work then falls roughly into two phases.

[Carroll, 1987, 210-211, footnote 6] From the early to mid-seventies he addressed the disruptive power of desire in such books as Discours, figure and Economie Libidinal. Here Lyotard sought the answers to his difficulties in a connection between Marx and Freud. However, later in the seventies, Lyotard's work began its second phase and took a 'linguistic' turn which rejected desire as the basis for a renewed liberatory politics. [Bennington, 1988, 1 & 113: Veerman, 1988] After this Lyotard began to explore the possibility of basing justice and politics on difference. In this phase he made an important contribution to the debate around postmodernism in his book The Postmodern Condition, published in nineteen seventy-nine, and explored the nature of justice in the co-authored Just Gaming, also published in nineteen seventy-nine. These two books laid the groundwork for the systematic exposition of his views on the nature of thought and politics in the wake of the sixties, which was published in nineteen eighty-three in The Differend. [Lyotard, 1979: Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979: Lyotard, 1983b: Lyotard, 1982a: Lyotard, 1988: Bennington, 1988, 2: Readings, 1991]

Lyotard's intellectual career encapsulates the disillusionment with Marxism and the subsequent need to redefine politics which makes up the left's collective memory and so it is his work of the late seventies and eighties, which offers his understanding of post-marxist politics and the role of difference and creativity in that politics, which will be analysed here. As already noted, this work is contained in the three books The Postmodern Condition, Just Gaming and The Differend, all of which will be explored in this chapter, and develops a politics based on difference.

Expositions: The Postmodern Condition¹

The Postmodern Condition was written at the request of the University Council of the government of Quebec, as a report on the condition of knowledge in the highly developed countries. [Lyotard, 1979, xxiii-xxv] For this report Lyotard took as his working hypothesis the idea, first, that the status of knowledge has altered as economies enter the postindustrial age and culture enters the postmodern and, second, the belief that through the computerisation of society knowledge has become the principle force for production while simultaneously being itself transformed into a commodity. Knowledge in the

¹ Lyotard has offered several meanings for the word postmodern. This section will be solely concerned with establishing what Lyotard means by it in The Postmodern Condition. Other definitions by him can be found in Lyotard, 1982b, 1982c and 1986.

postmodern age has become external to the knower, in the sense that it will no longer be part of the 'training of minds' but will be bought and sold on the principles of exchange and value. [Lyotard, 1979, 1-6]

Lyotard is not concerned to establish this hypothesis empirically but takes it as the starting point for a philosophical analysis. To conduct this analysis he develops a method which is based on Wittgenstein's view of language games. He summarises Wittgenstein's view as:

"each of the various categories of utterances [such as a question, a promise and so on] can be defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put- in exactly the same way as the game of chess is defined by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them." [Lyotard, 1979, 10; Brackets added]²

Lyotard summarises this method in two principles. First, that 'speech acts fall within the domain of a general agonistics' or a field of play. To formulate a speech act or make an utterance is to make a move in a game. Second, he states that the 'observable social bond' is made up of these moves in the possible fields of language games.

[Lyotard, 1979, 10-11] Lyotard also makes three observations concerning his method. First, the rules of

2 Lyotard's interpretations of other authors' work is notoriously idiosyncratic and he has been accused of being 'wild' and 'impious' in his readings. In this analysis no attempt has been made to compare Lyotard's readings with original work, as the aim is to summarise Lyotard's thought whatever its source. [Lyotard, 1984, 18-19]

these language games do not legitimate themselves but are the subject of a contract between players, though this does not necessarily mean that the players make up the rules. Second, if there are no rules there is no game and any change in the rules changes the nature of the game. Last, he reiterates that any utterance should be considered a move in a game. [Lyotard, 1979, 10]

Lyotard gives the example of a university dean or rector who makes the utterance "the university is open" at a convocation. The utterance has an addressor, the rector, an addressee, the audience at the convocation and more widely anyone concerned with the university, and a referent, the university and its openness. He notes that this utterance is part of the particular language game called the performative, where the effect of an utterance coincides with its enunciation. That is, the utterance is performative because the university is open when the rector pronounces it open in the correct circumstances. By making his utterance the rector thus makes a move in a particular language game and so constructs part of the social bond. [Lyotard, 1979, 9]

Lyotard next makes a point concerning the nature of knowledge by stating that knowledge is not just a set of statements which 'denote or describe objects that may be declared true or false', but also involves questions of technical efficiency, justice or happiness, beauty and so

on. That is, knowledge is the way language games are organised to produce or define not just what is true and false, but also what is ethical or just, how beauty is grasped and so on. [Lyotard, 1979, 18-19 & 26] Lyotard then outlines the 'pragmatics' of two forms of knowledge, narrative and scientific, in order to compare them.

Narrative knowledge, Lyotard claims all anthropologists and ethnologists agree, is the 'preeminent form in the formulation of traditional knowledge' and he highlights five aspects of it. First, narratives allow the society in which they are told to define its criteria of competence and the ways in which this criteria can be evaluated. This is done through the successes or failures that greet a hero's adventures that are recounted in a narrative. Telling a story confers legitimacy on certain social institutions and on positive and negative role models. [Lyotard, 1979, 19-20]

Second, each narrative contains a wide variety of language games which are held together by the unified viewpoint of a particular narrative. In the course of a story different language games, such as interrogatives (like the sphinx's riddle), denotatives (like the state of flora or fauna in areas or seasons), evaluatives and so on, can all be offered up to listeners on the basis of the unity the narrative stories offer. [Lyotard, 1979, 20]

Third, there are certain rules which define the transmission of the narrative. There are three narrative 'posts', addressor, addressee and hero or referent, and these three posts are organised so that the right to be an addressor is based on having been both an addressee and a referent. That is, the right to tell a story is based on having listened to a story and having been told of in a story. In this way a narrative defines the three-fold competence of know-how, knowing-how-to-speak and knowing-how-to-hear, which together constitute the pragmatic rules which make up the social bond of a community. [Lyotard, 1979, 20-21]

Fourth, narratives have a rhythm which combines accent and time in a way that, as metre takes precedent over accent and all accents are consequently reduced to an equal, monotonous repetition, moves the telling of narratives beyond time. Lyotard calls this a 'lethal function' of narrative knowledge because it kills time. He also notes that it knits the previous three functions of narrative knowledge together by moving narrative stories, and so also the social bond that these narratives construct, outside of time. Once outside of memory and time stories can refer simultaneously to the present and the past. [Lyotard, 1979, 21-22]

Last, Lyotard claims that narratives are incommensurable with the language game played by the modern West. He

argues that the West establishes the legitimacy of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, through an inquiry but a narrative's legitimacy comes from itself, because in being told a narrative defines the rules which form the social bond. Cultures based on narrative knowledge have no need for legitimation external to the narrative because narratives are self-legitimizing.

[Lyotard, 1979, 22-23]

Scientific knowledge is a different matter to narrative and Lyotard describes it in three basic principles. First, the addressor is required to tell the addressee the truth about the referent of a statement. Truth is here understood as the twin ability to offer a proof and to refute any alternative view. Second, the addressee must be able to validly give or withhold his or her assent to a statement, which implies that the addressee must be a possible addressor because the addressee's assent is based on the same requirement of truth that the addressor must satisfy to tell a truth. Scientific statements are addressed to other scientists and not to all members of society. Last, the way the statement 'expresses' the referent must be in accordance with what the referent actually is or, put another way, a scientific statement must accord with reality.

The last of Lyotard's three principles raises a problem for scientific knowledge because a statement that

endorses a statement of reality can only be expressed in the same form as the original statement, which means that the two statements are of equal legitimacy and so one cannot authorise the other. This means there is no proof of the proof of reality and so the third principle of scientific knowledge produces a legitimation problem.

[Lyotard, 1979, 23-24] Lyotard complicates this problem by noting that science's recurrent demand for truth makes contentment with any form of legitimation inherently unstable. Lyotard argues that though legitimation can be settled by procedures, such as the consensus of all possible addressors, any legitimating procedures can also be destabilised by the requirement of science's language game that it form truthful statements, because scientists will eventually have to ask whether the legitimation is true and if so what proves that it is true. At this point science's inability to prove its proofs will recur.

[Lyotard, 1979, 27-31]

Scientific and narrative knowledge diverge on many points and Lyotard notes five. First, while narratives involve all language games science requires only one, the denotative which governs statements like 'this is an x'.³ Second, science establishes itself outside of language games that form a social bond because scientific

3 Lyotard says of this use of 'denotation' that "'Denotation' corresponds here to 'description' in the classical use of logicians." [Lyotard, 1979, 88, footnote 29]

statements are addressed between scientists and not to the whole of society. Third, the referent in a scientific statement is external to the nature of the addressor or addressee of the statement. That is, the nature of a scientist's statement is independent of the nature of the scientist, unlike in narratives where the nature of the addressor and statement are intertwined. Fourth, scientific statements are only valid if they are currently verifiable, unlike narrative statements that may be continually retold. Science has a memory and a chronology where narrative is timeless. Last, whereas narrative knowledge can tolerate scientific knowledge, because narrative can treat science as just another variant of the 'family of narrative cultures', science cannot tolerate narrative because narrative knowledge is not legitimated according to scientific criteria. Science sees narratives as fables unfit for mature societies because they cannot be scientifically legitimated.

[Lyotard, 1979, 25-27]

Lyotard then argues that despite these differences science has for a long time solved its ongoing problem of legitimation by recourse to narratives. Lyotard notes that even if this marriage is a strange one:

"It is not inconceivable that the recourse to narrative is inevitable, at least to the extent that the language game of science desires its statements to be true but does not have the resources to legitimate their truth on its own." [Lyotard, 1979, 27]

The narratives which answer science's legitimization problems are called by Lyotard the meta-narratives of Western civilisation. He claims they sprang up in movements, such as the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, which were legitimating the bourgeois classes newly gained social authority and he details two of them; the dialectic of the Spirit and the emancipation of humanity. [Lyotard, 1979, 27-30: Lacoue-Labarthe, 1982, 27-34]

Lyotard traces the dialectic of the Spirit to the founding of Berlin University after eighteen seven and claims that it validates a notion of 'knowledge for its own sake'. A universal subject that is actualised by learning and which grounds both the legitimacy of knowledge and social institutions is posited. Knowledge can then be legitimated by its contribution to the development of this universal subject, also called the Spirit. [Lyotard, 1979, 32-35]

The second meta-narrative posits not a universal, ideal subject but a practical one, humanity. The narrative story here consists of the emancipation of this subject from whatever prevents it liberating itself. This meta-narrative assumes that the laws that humanity makes to govern itself are just because the people who make the laws are subject to them. Lyotard gives the example of Napoleon's reforms to higher education which were aimed at training people to run the state so that the whole

nation would gain its freedom through the state-sponsored spread of education. Under Napoleon education was thus legitimised by its ability to free the people.

Ultimately, legitimacy in this meta-narrative is gained from serving the goals of the collective. [Lyotard, 1979, 31-32 & 35-36]

Lyotard states that the appeal to meta-narratives such as the dialectic of the Spirit or the emancipation of humanity for legitimation is characteristic of the modern age and that the postmodern age is initiated by incredulity toward meta-narratives. [Lyotard, 1979, xxiii-xxiv] He remarks that this change from modern to postmodern came from two sources.

First, there has been the effect of both post-Second World War technology, which has shifted emphasis from the ends of action to its means, and the capitalist prosperity of this same period, which has 'valorised the individual enjoyment of goods'. Second, meta-narratives contain the seeds of their own destruction. For example, the narrative of the dialectic of the Spirit is damaged by science turning its own need for truth against the dialectic, which results in a failure to legitimate the 'Spirit'. Put another way, science cannot prove to its own satisfaction the existence of the universal subject that the dialectic of the spirit uses to legitimates science. Science also criticises the meta-narrative of

the emancipation by pointing out there is no guarantee of the connection between the descriptive statements of science and the prescriptive statements of humanity. Lyotard claims that the meta-narrative of humanity is destroyed without the passage from the descriptive (an 'is'), to the prescriptive (an 'ought'), because there is no reason to connect descriptives like 'humans are by nature free animals' to prescriptives, such as laws to safeguard that freedom, any more than there is a relationship of consequence between the statements 'the door is closed' and 'open the door'. [Lyotard, 1979, 37-41]

Lyotard has now reached his intended target, the nature of knowledge in the postmodern age. According to Lyotard postmodern knowledge disbelieves meta-narratives and so also disbelieves the major forms of legitimation for knowledge that have existed in Western society. Lyotard is then led to consider the nature of legitimation in postmodern knowledge.⁴ Lyotard first examines legitimation by 'performativity', which is the form of legitimation that results from the introduction of capitalism to both science and technology.

4 At this point Lyotard also quickly rejects the Habermasian project of legitimation through a consensus achieved by communication by claiming that it is dependent on the meta-narrative of the emancipation of humanity. [Lyotard, 1979, 60-61 & 65-66; Lyotard, 1982b 71-73]

Lyotard notes that wealth must be invested in research in order to produce new technology, but that once new technology is produced and applied to the system of production it can optimise the efficiency of the task and so optimise the surplus-value obtained from production. Once this surplus-value is sold by selling the product some of it can be reinvested in new research and so "science becomes a force of production, in other words, a moment in the circulation of capital." [Lyotard, 1979, 45 & 44-46]⁵

Lyotard claims that science legitimated by performativity is involved in a form of self-legitimation, in the sense that science is legitimated by its efficiency in production but what science produces is still scientific knowledge made according to the rules of the scientific language game. Science produces greater efficiency by producing more technically useful scientific proofs and this greater production of scientific proofs is legitimated by economic demands. Science legitimated through performativity is thus a form of postmodern knowledge because it does not refer to a meta-narrative. However, Lyotard also notes problems with legitimation through performativity. [Lyotard, 1979, 47]

5 According to Lyotard, performance should be understood as an input/output equation which seeks to maximise the output that can be gained from the input.

Performativity assumes determinism, that is it assumes there is a stable system in which the output can be determined from the input and Lyotard argues that this hypothesis has been undermined in two ways. First, the language game of science does not seek such stability but continually seeks to invent counterexamples to existing proofs and then to develop 'new rules in the game of reasoning'. Second, the nature of twentieth century science itself limits the applicability of determinism. For example, quantum mechanics and atomic physics deny that a complete definition of the initial state of a system is possible and without this definition determinism in a system is uncertain. Alternatively, quantum mechanics claims that precision is limited by the nature of matter, in the sense that uncertainty and accuracy can simultaneously increase. Lyotard also notes that these problems are not confined to micro-physics. [Lyotard, 1979, 53-59: Levy and Pierssens, 1983]

For these reasons Lyotard sees performativity as itself delegitimated and so he outlines a second form of postmodern knowledge.

"Postmodern science- by concerning itself with such things as undecidables, the limits of precise control, conflicts characterised by incomplete information, '*fracta*', catastrophes, and pragmatic paradoxes- is theorising its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical. It is changing the word *knowledge*, while expressing how such a change can take place. It is producing not the known but the unknown. And it suggests a model of legitimation that has nothing to do with maximised performance, but has as its

basis difference understood as paralogy." [Lyotard, 1979, 60]

Lyotard defines paralogy as the making of moves in a language game and so claims that postmodern science can be legitimated by the ability to make moves. He quotes P.B. Medawar saying that "*having ideas* is the scientist's highest accomplishment." [Lyotard, 1979, 60] Science's role is thus to create difference, to make new ideas and, in general, to practice proliferation rather than performance. Legitimation by paralogy is also self-legitimizing because it answers the question 'how do we prove our proofs' by turning back to its own language game and stating that a proof of a proof is that a new idea has been established. Legitimation accordingly consists of the right to make moves or to play the game, and proof of a legitimate move is that it has been made. [Lyotard, 1979, 60-64]

"Science is a model of an 'open system', in which a statement becomes relevant if it 'generates ideas', that is, if it generates other statements and other game rules." [Lyotard, 1979, 64]

Finally, in The Postmodern Condition, Lyotard asks what the relevance of this vision of postmodern science is for all forms of knowledge under the conditions of postmodernity. He notes that though social language games do not have the simplicity of scientific games, the essentials of legitimation through paralogy are still relevant and can be expressed through two principles which establish the nature of postmodern language games.

First, the heterogeneous nature of language games must be recognised because there are no meta-narratives which can legitimate one game over another. This means that the only form of game that can be rejected is that of terror, because this is the game that denies other games the right to exist. Second, any consensus on the rules of a game must be local, subject to agreement by its players and subject to eventual cancellation, otherwise there would be the ever present threat of terror. The introduction of short term contracts reflects this principle. For example, in the West there is an increasing rejection of a single life-long relationship between the sexes in favour of a series of short term relationships or contracts. [Lyotard, 1979, 64-66]

Lyotard completes his report by returning to his original hypothesis, that knowledge in the postmodern age has been deeply affected by the computerisation of society, because computers can be seen as the perfect tools for both knowledge legitimated by performativity and knowledge legitimated by the pure inventiveness of paralogy. For performativity, computers could be the perfect instrument to control and regulate the world market. For example, computers have the ability to track stock market changes around the world instantaneously or to control a company's stock by the hour. For paralogy, Lyotard notes that if people had free access to computer data-banks then this could provide equal access to the

knowledge in society, thereby enabling participation by everyone in language games of perfect knowledge at any given moment. [Lyotard, 1979, 67]

Several objections could and have been made to Lyotard's report, not least of all by Lyotard himself. [Lyotard, 1986, 6; Bennington, 1988, 116-117] In the present context the most important facet of his analysis is that knowledge legitimated by paralogy is knowledge legitimated by its ability to create difference or make new moves in language games. Paralogy, or the creation of difference, is the means of legitimating knowledge in postmodern society because there are no meta-narratives that can legitimate one language game over another. Before analysing this vision the content of Just Gaming and The Differend will also be summarised.

Expositions: Just Gaming.

Just Gaming takes the form of a dialogue that was conducted on seven days over seven months between Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thebaud, who was in nineteen seventy-nine the editor of the French literary quarterly *L'esprit*. The dialogue covers many topics but a central thread concerns the nature of justice.

Justice first emerges in Just Gaming when Lyotard reposes the disjunction between descriptive and

prescriptive statements, that has already been noted in The Postmodern Condition.

"I am struck by the fact that prescriptives, taken seriously, are never grounded: one can never reach the just by a conclusion. And particularly, that which ought to be cannot be concluded from that which is, the 'ought' from the 'is'." [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 17]

An 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is', Lyotard argues, because they are different forms of statements. Lyotard notes that descriptive statements concern propositional logic and attempt to state the truth but that prescriptive statements concern neither of these. Any passage between the two is therefore 'properly speaking unintelligible' and additional premises are needed to move from one to the other. For example, the description 'there are three million people unemployed' and the prescription 'the government should create more jobs' are not intelligibly connected unless a range of premises, such as 'unemployment is bad' and 'unemployment is the government's responsibility', are added. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 19-22] Lyotard argues that politics and justice are intertwined in this logical point because, from Plato to Marx, the conviction that there is a true being to society and that justice will reign when society is brought to that true being, has dominated western politics. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 23-24]

Lyotard then warns that what can easily follow the disconnection of prescriptives from descriptives is an allegiance to a 'philosophy of opinion'. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 73-74] He writes that the result of such a disconnection could be that:

"one would reach the very simple position that what is just in a collectivity of human beings at a given moment, is that which has been convened as just. But, locked in this frame, one loses all capacity to make the slightest judgement about what ought to be done....A rule by convention would require that one accept, let's get to the bottom of things right away, even Nazism. After all, since there was near unanimity upon it, from where could one judge that it was not just ?" [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 74]

For Lyotard, the consequence of prescriptives being based on themselves, and not a different language game, is that politics may become a 'politics of opinion', where any prescriptive may be accepted because all prescriptives occur within the prescriptive language game and so there are no means of judging between them. As Lyotard notes, the reverse or 'bad' side of a politics which does not derive its prescriptives from descriptives is a political indifferentism. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 73-76 & 96]

Lyotard responds to this difficulty with Kant's Idea of a suprasensible nature, which he interprets to mean that all actions must be compatible with the survival of the 'totality of practical, reasonable beings'. Lyotard reiterates that he has done with 'rational politics' because the prescriptive cannot be derived from another language game, but he also wishes to avoid the possible

relativist consequences. He therefore proposes Kant's Idea as a limit which does not itself advocate a positive ethical vision but which restricts what is ethically acceptable by rejecting any politics that would result in the totality of practical, reasonable beings no longer existing. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 75-79] Of Kant's Idea Lyotard states:

"It is not even able to give us contents for prescriptions, but just regulates our prescriptives, that is, guides us in knowing what is just and what is not just." [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 77]

In summary, when the heterogeneity of the descriptive and the prescriptive is generalised to all language games, Lyotard becomes faced with the problem of political relativism. That is, he is faced with the problem that all language games are legitimate only within their own game and so can never legislate for another game.

Language games must remain 'pure' but if they do so the politics of opinion results. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 96-97] Kant's Idea here emerges as the claim that any language game that does not respect this purity is unjust, as it does not respect the heterogeneity of language games and will not protect the totality of reasonable beings. Kant's Idea establishes a limit which can reject certain language games and accept others thereby overcoming, to a certain extent, relativism. Terror, defined as the prevention of a language game or the liquidation of the Kantian community, thus becomes

the only form of politics that can be legitimately opposed. [Lyotard and Thebaud, 1979, 91-92]

Just Gaming thus reaches similar conclusions to The Postmodern Condition. In each case Lyotard destroys a form of legitimation and in its place discovers a multiplicity of heterogeneous language games where only a politics that does not respect this heterogeneity can be barred. But Lyotard's thought is still haunted by a political indifferentism among all the possible politics that do not employ terror. That is, Lyotard seems to have no means of answering the question, how can non-terrorist politics be judged. The Postmodern Condition and Just Gaming have created negative arguments but it is not clear whether Lyotard could endorse any positive or constructive politics. To examine Lyotard's systematic politics his book, The Differend, needs to be analysed.

Expositions: The Differend.

The Differend is a book of a different quality to both The Postmodern Condition and Just Gaming. It is long where the others are short, it is detailed where the others are sketchy and it is conclusive where the others are speculative. Through these differences The Differend attempts to live up to its claim to have achieved the postmodern philosophy that the other two books merely

call for. It is therefore important to outline the philosophical system this book proposes.

Lyotard builds this system from the test of universal doubt. He asks 'what cannot be doubted' and the answer stems from his rejection, subsequent to The Postmodern Condition and Just Gaming, of the terminology of language games. He argues that this terminology suggests that players are able to use language as a toolbox, by implying that players choose a game and then play it. Instead, Lyotard develops the term 'phrase', in order to imply that people are situated by the phrase and not vice-versa. [Lyotard, 1983b, 55: Lyotard, 1984, 17] The 'phrase' is also the answer to the Cartesian question 'what cannot be doubted' because to doubt involves making a phrase. Lyotard wrote: "It does not result from the phrase *I doubt*, that I am, merely that there has been a phrase." [Lyotard, 1983b, 59] Put another way, the phrase 'the phrase escapes universal doubt' cannot be denied without forming a phrase and so affirming it. For Lyotard it is impossible for there to be no phrase. [Lyotard, 1983b, 65-67: Lyotard, 1986, 53-54]

A phrase is not a sentence or a proposition, for a wink or a shrug of the shoulders can be a phrase, as can exclamations such as 'whoops' and even silence. Using a Greek myth as an example Lyotard wrote:

"Back from Troy, Agammemnon has just entered the palace of Atreus, leaving Cassandra, his captive motionless in the chariot. Clytemnestra entreats her to come in too. Frozen by her vision of the impending crime, Cassandra neither hears nor answers: "She bears herself like a wild creature newly captured" (1063). The queen grows impatient: "But if failing to understand our language, you do not catch my meaning, then instead of speech, make sign {phrase} with thy barbarian hand." -Silence as a phrase. The expectant wait of the *Is it happening* ? as silence. Feelings as a phrase for what cannot now be phrased." [Lyotard, 1983b, 70]

Another example, which will be used throughout this chapter in order to provide clarity and continuity, can be taken from the world of hard-boiled detective fiction. A fictional detective might make the phrase 'you took it !' to a woman and be met with a silence. The silence might tell the detective, named Marlowe, what he needs to know and so allow him to make a new phrase 'the silence confirms she took it'. Such a silence from 'her' is also a phrase that may be met with a spoken phrase, 'give it here', a physical phrase in an attempt to search her for 'it' or another silent phrase as Marlowe, having understood the first silent phrase, is left with his own silence perhaps meaning 'she's got it, but what do I do now ?'.

Lyotard next stresses that though the fact that a phrase exists is certain, its content is not. He claims that it is only the 'there is' of the phrase 'there is a phrase' that is certain. The fact that a phrase happens is certain, not what the phrase means. Lyotard then claims that the 'there is' that is entailed by 'there is a

phrase' is a universe made up of "what is signified, what it is signified about, to whom and by whom it is signified: a universe." For example, when Marlowe says 'you took it !' a universe of addressor ('Marlowe'), addressee ('her'), referent ('it'), and sense (the prescription 'tell me if you took something'), is presented. [Lyotard, 1983b, 70] Accordingly, what is indubitable for Lyotard is not 'the universe that is presented' but the 'presentation of at least one universe'. That is, that a universe is presented in a phrase is certain, not the nature of a presented universe. [Lyotard, 1983b, 70-72]

It is only 'at least' one universe that is certain because any one or more of a universe's four components could be equivocal. For example, if Marlowe were not sure that she took it, he might find himself in more than one universe. Marlowe makes his accusation, 'you took it !', and then she is silent. The silence could be ambiguous to Marlowe so that he forms the phrase, 'she could have taken it, but maybe the dwarf took it', and suddenly Marlowe must deal with two universes depending on whether she or the dwarf have 'it'. [Lyotard, 1983b, 13-14 & 69-71; Bennington, 1988, 126]

A phrase is the presentation of a universe. This universe is four part; sense, referent, addressor and addressee. Lyotard also notes that the phrase situates each of its

four parts. It is not that a phrase is an instance passed between two independent addresses but that in a phrase the addressee and addressor are instances presented by the phrase. The phrase does not presume a subject who controls and enunciates it. [Lyotard, 1983b, 11: Lyotard, 1984, 17]

Having established both the indubitability of a phrase and its nature as a universe, Lyotard also establishes that there is more than one phrase. A phrase, as Bennington puts it, "presents what it presents, but cannot present that it presents what it present."

[Bennington, 1988, 126] A phrase is just the 'there is', it is just the fact that a universe exists, which means that the phrase does not itself tell us that its universe exists. It is necessary for at least one other phrase to link to a phrase in order for the first phrase to be presented, otherwise it would not be known that the first phrase existed. For example, Marlowe's phrase 'you took it !' is only known because it is presented by the phrases of the author of these detective novels, called Chandler, or is used as an example by the author of this thesis. If Chandler had not made the phrase which presents the particular case of Marlowe's phrase, then 'you took it !' said by a detective to a woman about an 'it' and with the sense of a prescription, that is to say a universe, would not have been presented and so it would not have existed.

"The presentation entailed by a phrase...is not presented in the universe that this phrase presents.... It is not situated. But another phrase...can present it in another universe and thereby situate it." [Lyotard, 1983b, 71]
 "What is not presented is not. The presentation entailed by a phrase is not presented, it is not: Being is not." [Lyotard, 1983b, 77]

It is indubitable that there is a phrase and so it is indubitable that there is a phrase that presents the phrase, or else the first phrase would not exist because it would not be presented. It is therefore indubitable that there is more than one phrase and that these phrases link. However, the way that phrases link to each other is not determined, all that is certain is that they do link. [Lyotard, 1983b, 29] For example, both Chandler and the author of this analysis of Lyotard linked to Marlowe's phrase and in the two different universes created by Chandler's phrase and this author's phrase Marlowe's phrase is different. In one the sense of 'you took it' is that of a detective narrative and in the other it is an example of the philosophy of Jean-Francois Lyotard. In short, different links to 'you took it' can occur, all that is certain is that there must be a link to that phrase or it would not exist. [Lyotard, 1983b, 66-80] The way phrases link is Lyotard's next problem and he isolates two systematic forms of linkage, phrase regimens and genres of discourse.⁶

6 In the following regimens and genres will be distinguished but Lyotard, though he stresses the importance of keeping the two separate, is not always rigorous and at times there seems to be confusion between the two. For example he wrote "Between the phrases of

Lyotard defines regimens and genres by noting there is a difference between the rules of a game and the strategy needed to play a game well. He then claims that regimens are analogous to the rules of a game, whereas genres are the strategy needed to play a game in a certain way.

[Lyotard, 1983b, 136-137]

Regimens link phrases together according to a set of rules. For example Marlowe's phrase is part of the prescriptive regimen because it was 'you took it !' understood in the sense of 'you must tell me if you took it' and so was formed according to the rules for prescribing actions to others. In contrast, when the following phrase of silence from her is understood as 'yes, I took it' it is ruled by the descriptive because it is then formed according to the rules for describing a situation. An important facet of phrase regimens is that they are heterogeneous because regimens cannot be translated into each other, just as the rules of chess cannot be translated into those of tennis. [Lyotard, 1983b, xii, 123, 136-137; Bennington, 1988, 122-123]

Regimens link phrases according to heterogeneous sets of rules but genres make links between phrases from

imagination on the one hand, the phrases of technical effectuation on the other, and finally the phrases that follow the rules of the economic genre, there is heterogeneity. Capital subordinates the first two regimens to the third." [Lyotard, 1983b, 175] In this passage the economic appears confusingly as both a regimen and a genre.

heterogeneous regimens according to an end. Lyotard argues that after a phrase is made it is inevitable that another phrase will link to it, though which particular phrase may come next is not inevitable. Genres influence what phrase may come next and reduce which linkages are possible by introducing an end toward which phrases are influenced. [Lyotard, 1983b, 83-85 & 135-137]

"The idea of seduction needs to be extended. A genre of discourse exerts a seduction upon a phrase universe. It inclines the instances presented by this phrase toward certain linkings, or at least it steers them away from other linkings which are not suitable with regard to the end pursued by this genre. It is not the addressee who is seduced by the addressor. The addressor, the referent, and the sense are no less subject than the addressee to the seduction exerted by what is at play in a genre of discourse." [Lyotard, 1983b, 84]

For example, there is the phrase 'you took it !', in which there is an addressor, Marlowe, an addressee, her, a referent, it, and a sense, a prescriptive understood as 'tell me if you took it'. This universe is situated in the genre of the detective novel which exerts an influence and so makes certain linkings to Marlowe's phrase more likely than others. For instance, a woman in such a genre often exerts power by seduction rather than physical force and so her silence is a phrase influenced by the genre in the sense that it 'fits' with how a woman in such a genre could be expected to act; that is, her silence accords with the ends of the genre which assign certain characteristics to women and men. If she had linked to the universe of 'you took it!' by saying 'you

make a command to me, you are operating from the prescriptive but I may link as I choose because phrase regimens are heterogeneous and I choose to link with cognitive phrases and analyse your genre', while simultaneously brandishing a copy of Jean-Francois Lyotard's The Differend, then this would have resisted the teleology of the detective genre. In contrast, if the genre was not the detective novel but literary criticism, then the second 'Lyotardian' answer to 'you took it !' might be appropriate to that genre's ends. [Rowson, 1990: Symons, 1972: Lambert, 1975; Knight, 1980]

In genres some possible linkages are destroyed because one linkage becomes a reality. For instance, 'she' did not brandish a copy of The Differend but replied with a guilty silence which, within the genre of the detective novel, is easily read as a silent admission of a woman to an accusation. This appropriate or 'seduced' linkage made other linkages impossible, such as one where 'she' turns out to be an alien and eats Marlowe, or another where 'she' turns out to be the superhero Wonder Woman and lassos him, or as already noted when she is a student of Lyotard. Lyotard noted of this destruction of possible linkings that:

"'I can come by your place' allows many diverse linkings, and if not all of them, then at least some of them, stem from different genres of discourse. The multiplicity of stakes, on a par with the multiplicity of genres, turns every linkage into a kind of 'victory' of one of them over the others. These others remain neglected, forgotten, or

repressed possibilities...there is only one phrase 'at a time' (*a la fois*). There are many possible linkings (or genres) but only one actual or current 'time'" [Lyotard, 1983b, 136]

The 'kind of victory' Lyotard mentions occurs within genres and is an example of what he calls a 'differend'.

A differend is when the judgement of a conflict is conducted by rules which cannot recognise at least one viewpoint to the conflict. In contrast, a litigation is where both parties can be presented in the conflict.

[Lyotard, 1983b, 1-6] An example of a differend is given by Bill Readings from the Werner Herzog film Where the Green Ants Dream. In this film there is a character called Mute, who is an Australian Aborigine who is thought to be mute, but during a trial concerning Aboriginal land rights Mute suddenly begins to speak and the judge asks for a translation. The judge is then told that Mute is the last of his tribe and no-one can understand his language. Mute's claim to land rights in this trial is therefore unrepresentable, though the trial will address Mute's claim, and this failure to allow Mute representation forms a differend. [Readings, 1991, 123-4] A second example is a labour court where a Marxist interpretation of labour is not admissible. Accordingly a Marxist inclined worker cannot have his or her claim recognised in this court and so when the court rules in relation to this worker a differend results. [Lyotard, 1983b, 10]

As already noted a genre links together phrases that serve its own end and so prevents other possible linkages from occurring. In this way genres continually create differends by seducing particular linkages which deny other possible linkages. For example, it does not serve the ends of the genre of the detective novel if 'she' turns out to have superpowers and so the phrase which would present that particular universe is pushed aside by the genre's powers of seduction and a differend is created.

"In the differend, something 'asks' to be put into phrases, and suffers the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away." [Lyotard, 1983b, 13]

Lyotard's system now faces the problem of how and where such phrases meet in order to form differends because phrases from heterogeneous regimens, strictly speaking, never meet each other. Lyotard's answer is that phrases meet through proper names. He claims that names are 'rigid designators' because they are rigid, the name is always the same, and they designate something, though what is designated may vary. A name is constituted by its rigidity and the fact that it designates, not what it designates. [Lyotard, 1983b, 32-41] For example, 'Marlowe' is rigid in that it is always the same but what 'Marlowe' designates is not certain. There is Marlowe the hard-boiled detective or Marlowe the example of Lyotard's philosophy or Marlowe the sixteenth century English poet. In addition, Lyotard notes that a relation between names

can itself be given a name and he calls networks of names and names of relations between names, a world. [Lyotard, 1983b, 40-50]

Lyotard can now argue that differends can occur because heterogenous phrases meet in networks of proper names. For example, a worker is known as such whether the labour court sense or the Marxist sense of 'worker' is used, but in front of the labour court or in front of a panel of Marxists there is a differend because one party cannot have its phrases presented. Similarly, Mute was known as an aborigine and so could be present at a trial concerning aboriginal land rights, but because his particular form of aboriginality was incommunicable he could not present his claim to the court and so a differend resulted.

Lyotard's basic 'philosophy of phrases', as it is presented in The Differend, consists of phrases which present four-part universes each made up of addressor, addressee, referent and sense. Phrases can be organised according to the rules of phrase regimens, which are themselves heterogeneous from each other. Phrases from different regimens can be linked together according to genres of discourse which provide an end toward which phrases are seduced. Heterogeneous phrases are able to meet because networks of names provide common reference points which do not enforce a common 'sense' to the

phrases which include them. Differends are formed in the clash of heterogeneous phrases when one phrase cannot be presented in the clash.

Lyotard also considers the form of politics that this philosophy of phrases supports. He argues that the search for some political authority which could control the genres that make up society, by forming the language moves that make up the social bond, forever runs into the heterogeneity of phrases. [Lyotard, 1983b, 142]

"What politics is about and what distinguishes various kinds of politics is the genre of discourse, or the stakes, whereby differends are formulated as litigations and find their 'regulation'. Whatever genre this is, from the sole fact that it excludes other genres, whether through interdiction (slaves and women), through autonymic neutralization, through narrative redemption, etc., it leaves a 'residue' of differends that are not regulated and cannot be regulated within an idiom, a residue from whence the civil war of 'language' can always return, and indeed does return." [Lyotard, 1983b, 142]

Lyotard argues that politics concerns the different ends and linkages that various genres form, while recognising that there is no means of authorising one genre's end over any other. Politics is the realm of genres and in this realm, due to the heterogeneity of phrases, there is no form of legitimation that can authorise one genre's control of phrases over any other genre. [Lyotard, 1983b, 140-144]

In addition, Lyotard claims there is a legitimate responsibility related to preventing anyone from being prevented from phrasing because to prevent anyone from making phrases would exclude them from the political. Political responsibility thus consists of defending the right to make phrases, which means detecting differends and trying to find phrases for those phrases that have been prevented from being presented. Such attempts to 'present the unpresentable' are called by Lyotard the sublime. [Lyotard, 1983b, 142]

The sublime is the feeling of wanting to be able to put into phrases an idea or a totality but not being able to do so, it is a mixed feeling of the pleasure of realising the capacity to conceive ideas beyond any intuitive presentation and the pain of not being able to put those ideas fully into phrases. The sublime is the simultaneous recognition of the limitations of thought and the affirmation of thought's possibilities. The sublime is political, in Lyotard's terms, because it affirms the ability to make new or different phrases. [Lyotard, 1983b, 139 & 178; Bennington, 1988, 166; Carroll, 1984, 82-84]

The politics of the sublime developed by Lyotard can be understood as two tier. The first tier is that of genres where ends are created and social moves are made to realise those ends, but where there is no hope of

legitimizing any one genre over another. As already noted Lyotard calls this tier politics. The second tier is the principle that anyone must have the right to phrase and so the only genre that can legitimately be outlawed is one that prevents people phrasing. Lyotard calls this tier philosophy.

"One's responsibility before thought consists...in detecting differends and in finding the (impossible) idiom for phrasing them. This is what a philosopher does." [Lyotard, 1983b, 142]

Philosophy's task is endless because genres, in the realm of politics, always calls forth differends by preventing some phrases from being presented. For Lyotard to play politics is necessarily to commit injustices by creating differends and to play philosophy is to ensure that the injustices created by politics are uncovered.

The definitions of politics and philosophy derived from the philosophy of phrases complete the exposition of the essential system of The Differend and the political implications that have been found are similar to those derived from The Postmodern Condition and Just Gaming. For all three, the only politics that can be completely rejected is that of terror which prevents the right to phrase, destroys the right to play language games or prevents the existence of the totality of reasonable beings. Otherwise all politics are equal, in the sense

that there is no means of legitimating one non-terrorist politics over the other.

Difference and Indifferentism.

To begin analysis of Lyotard's work it can be argued that it yields the same problem of indifferentism that was found in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Lyotard argues there are no grounds, and can never be any grounds, for one genre and the ends it pursues being legitimated over another genre. This is guaranteed by the heterogeneity of phrase regimens and is the condition of postmodern politics. [Lyotard, 1982c, 178] By defining politics as the way in which particular genres attach phrases from heterogeneous regimens according to an end Lyotard abandons the political to the 'politics of opinion' because he abandons any possibility of judging between genres. This abandonment is most obvious in Just Gaming, where the effect of recognising the heterogeneity of the descriptive from the prescriptive is a politics that at one point seems unable to oppose even the Nazis, but it is also clear in The Differend and The Postmodern Condition.

In Just Gaming Lyotard attempts to save himself from political relativism by inscribing politics within a horizon determined by the Kantian Idea that any politics must not prevent the continued existence of the 'totality

of practical, reasonable beings'. Lyotard interprets Kant into his own terminology as the right to play language games, or later as the right to make phrases, and so he sets an outer limit to politics and then, in The Differend, gives philosophy the role of guarding it. However, within this limit there is still political indifferentism. In fact Lyotard makes clear in The Differend that the limit is meant to impose such an indifferentism by ensuring that the differends, the unsaid phrases that genres inevitably throw up, are made into phrases by philosophy. The unpresented phrases that philosophy presents will then contradict the genres that threw them up, because that is why the phrases went unpresented in the first place. In short, philosophy's role is to continually disrupt the political by disrupting genres. In Lyotard a commitment to difference results not only in being solely concerned with the right to make differences, but also with the disruption of any form of politics that does become established.

Lyotard thus reproduces the problem already called indifferentism. Lyotard's conclusions do not, however, result from a commitment to a theory of desire but from his 'linguistic turn'. Once this turn is followed through a second objection to Lyotard can be made, because the philosophy of phrases is also idealist.

Lyotard and Cartesianism.

Lyotard's path to The Differend began with the difficulty he had expressing his disillusionment with Marxism. He wrote that he was initially stupefied in his attempt to articulate his differend with Marxism by the question 'what language could it be expressed in'. If he used Marxist terms then this reintroduced what he wanted to criticise, Marxism, and if he used non-Marxist terms then the Marxists he wished to communicate with would reject his claims. He was thus forced to consider the question "according to what rules can we debate the rules to adopt for debate ?" [Lyotard, 1982a, 52 & 52-54]

Lyotard was, at the outset of his quest for a new form of politics, immediately directed to the forms of legitimation of political debate. In The Differend he offers an answer to the nature of the preconditions of debate in the philosophy of phrases and the two tiers of politics and philosophy. It has already been noted that this philosophy leads to political indifferentism, but it can also be shown that beginning from the Cartesian test of universal doubt creates an idealist basis for the philosophy of phrases. This can most clearly be done by examining Lyotard's analysis in The Differend of the historian Robert Faurisson's claim that it cannot be proved that mass murders occurred in Auschwitz.

Lyotard begins The Differend by analysing Faurisson's argument that the Nazi 'Final Solution' cannot be proven because Faurisson has not been able to find a single person who was an eye witness to the operation of the gas chambers. That is, Faurisson says the mass murders are unproven because he has never found someone who witnessed death occurring in the gas chambers. [Lyotard, 1983b, 1-31] Lyotard explains Faurisson's logic in this way:

"To have 'really seen with his own eyes' a gas chamber would be the condition which gives one the authority to say that it exists and to persuade the unbeliever. Yet it is still necessary to prove that the gas chamber was used to kill at the time it was seen. The only acceptable proof that it was used to kill is that one died from it. But if one is dead, one cannot testify that it is on account of the gas chamber." [Lyotard, 1983b, 3]

A differend is where the victim is divested of the ability to represent themselves in front of a tribunal and Faurisson has established a tribunal, 'to really see with his or her own eyes', which reduces the inmates of concentration camps to silence and so creates a differend. The only people who can fulfil Faurisson's criteria would be dead, as that is the only authoritative way to have witnessed the murders but because they are dead they cannot testify and so the inmates are reduced to silence as ineligible witnesses. The obvious question to ask of this argument is, why does Faurisson's criteria carry weight ? Lyotard argues:

"Why should there be less paranoia in denying the existence of gas chambers than in affirming it ? Because, writes Leibniz, 'nothing is simpler and

easier than something'. The one who says there is something is the plaintiff, it is up to him or her to bring forth a demonstration, by means of well-formed phrases and of procedures for establishing the existence of their referent. Reality is always the plaintiff's responsibility. For the defense, it is sufficient to refute the argumentation and to impugn the proof by counter-example. This is the defense's advantage...it cannot be said that a hypothesis is verified, but only that until further notice it has not yet been falsified. The defence is nihilistic, the prosecution pleads for existents (*l'etant*). That is why it is up to the victims of the extermination camps to prove that extermination." [Lyotard, 1983b, 8-9]

Faurisson has the advantage of setting the criteria because Leibniz's principle of simplicity delivers it to him. Faurisson claims less than the victims of the camps, he claims there were no camps, and this simpler reality will stand until disproved by the proof of a more complex reality.

In criticism of Lyotard it can be argued that he allows Faurisson's statement priority as the defence only because he reads Leibniz's principle in a manner which decontextualises statements. Lyotard holds Faurisson's statement to be simpler because it says 'not-p' where others have for a long time said 'p'. For Lyotard, the content of 'p' is irrelevant when deciding which statement is simpler because he focuses on the logic of Leibniz's principle. However there is an alternative to Lyotard's interpretation, for a materialist or contextualist version of the Leibnizian principle of simplicity could claim that there is always a reality, though it is not certain what form that reality takes,

and therefore when a certain reality has become established it is more complex to change that reality than to leave it unchanged. In this case 'what is new' is the plaintiff because what is established is simpler. On this materialist principle of simplicity Faurisson, who presents a case in the genre of history which goes against over forty years of historical work, must prove there were no gas chambers and cannot rely on the privileges of defence. In addition, Faurisson would not be being asked to prove a negative because there is a body of historical evidence that he must confront and disprove if he is to establish his case.

In each of the two interpretations of Leibniz's principle there is an assumption made as to what 'nothing' and 'something' mean. Lyotard takes an abstract view which assumes that the referent for 'nothing' can be a state totally beyond any social or linguistic context and therefore that any claim about such contexts will be a 'something'. The alternative version argues that, as there is never a nothing outside of a social setting, nothing must be understood as the currently accepted reality and therefore 'something' is the claim that there is a new reality different to the established one. The difference between the idealist and contextualist versions of nothing turns on the opposed assumptions that

there can be phrases with no context or that phrases are always in a context.⁷

The central point here is not to establish whether either of these two forms of the Leibnizian principle are more correct than the other, rather it is to locate Lyotard's interpretation and the fact that it privileges the abstract over the material or the contextual. In the example of Faurisson and the differend of the deportees Lyotard gives a decontextualised account because he bases his analysis on the assumption that Faurisson's phrases can exist outside of the genre of historical inquiry. This is idealist because it removes Faurisson's phrases from any context and deals with them in the abstract.

7 If Lyotard's version appears more intuitively correct that is probably because the signifier 'nothing' seduces its referent, through a proper name, toward the idealist or Lyotardian sense. 'Nothing' in Lyotard's version is taken to refer to the generally understood sense of nothing, a null or a void, and so 'no gas ovens exist' is a nothing against the something 'gas ovens exist'. However, this move itself demonstrates the materialist hypothesis that there is always a context because the move can only be made by relying on the pre-existence of a referent for the signifier 'nothing'. That is, the meaning of 'nothing' as a null or void can be linked to Leibniz's 'nothing', only if the referent 'null or void' already exists. This referent forms a context in which the meaning of 'nothing' can be seduced to 'null or void'. What is paradoxical in this case is that the referent of nothing denies that such referents as itself exist. The materialist hypothesis may be counter-intuitive but it accepts that no word is contextless and so what is simpler is not to change a context. In this way Faurisson's positing of 'no gas ovens exist' must take the responsibility to establish itself over the existent, and therefore simpler, context of 'gas ovens exist'.

Lyotard's commitment to abstraction results from the test of universal doubt because that test legitimates the notion of phrases outside of any context. What is indubitable for Lyotard is that a phrase exists and that it links and not that phrases always exist in the context of genres and regimens. For Lyotard a linkage is not restrained or made impossible by the certainty of a pre-existent genre but the certainty that a linkage must be made makes genres and regimens possible. The test of doubt leads to the privileging of the contextless phrase and its contextless links over any context.

Another example of the primacy of the contextless or abstract phrase is that, for Lyotard, every linking of one particular phrase to another prevents other phrases being linked, which produces differends and so is responsible for the production of injustice in the prevention of a phrase coming into being. What is here given primacy is the abstract possibility of any linkage over a context which might make only certain linkages sensible. For example, it makes little sense to link to Marlowe's phrase 'you took it !' with 'her' being revealed as an alien and eating him, unless the linkage occurs in a different genre to the detective novel. However, Lyotard's view is that the failure of such alien phrases to link, and so be presented, forms differends which it is philosophy's responsibility to form.

It is a form of linguistic idealism to base a philosophy on the possibility that in any context any phrase or any linkage between phrases is equally possible and sensible. This idealism, which underpins the concern for differends, amounts to a belief that phrases such as having Philip Marlowe eaten by aliens or lassoed by Wonder Woman on the mean streets of San Francisco must be given equal status as possible linkages as 'her' silence.

Idealism and Indifferentism.

Analysis of Lyotard reveals his commitment to difference in his commitment to the right to make phrases or play language games above any other right. As with Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard becomes primarily concerned to protect the right to create new differences and he thus develops a vision where legitimate politics are non-terrorist but there are no means of choosing between different non-terrorist politics. For Lyotard, the only means of choosing between forms of politics is with a line between legitimate and non-legitimate that is drawn by the right to create differences or, in Lyotard's terms, to make phrases and play language games.

A second result of Lyotard's assertion of the rights of difference creation is idealism. This idealism develops from his concern to protect the creation of difference because it stems from his assumption that all phrases are

equally sensible no matter what their context, because all different phrases have an equal right to exist. It is the failure to locate phrases in a context that underpins Lyotard's idealism.

The left's collective memory implies that a post-Marxist left might be based on difference and so two distinct theories of difference have been outlined and analysed. To completely develop the implications of the left's memory difference based theories now need to be considered in general. The next chapter will examine the relationship of a difference based left to the political indifferentism and functionalism of Deleuze and Guattari and the political indifferentism and idealism of Lyotard's post-Marxist philosophy of phrases.

Chapter Six: The Failures of Difference Based Politics.

Difference.

Theories of difference, like those of Lyotard's and Deleuze and Guattari's, have had a political referent in the emergence of new social movements. It is not that difference based theories encapsulate these movements but when such theories address politics they often endorse post-sixties anti-oppression movements. For example, Autonomia was theorised as the precursor of 'post-political politics' by writers influenced by Deleuze and Guattari. [Lotringer and Marazzi, 1980b] The rise since the sixties of many different anti-oppression movements and the rise of difference based theories are in this way connected and, as the left's collective memory implies, it is therefore possible to ask whether a left that includes all the different post-sixties anti-oppression movements should be a left based on difference.

The significance of difference based theories has so far been examined by outlining and criticising Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desire and Lyotard's philosophy of phrases and general conclusions about a difference based left can now be drawn from these critiques. Once this is completed the two major paths that are implied by the left's collective memory, value based or difference based

politics, will have been explored and the implications of the left's collective memory will be clear.

The Recall of Value.

Deleuze and Guattari's work develops a belief in difference as liberatory through a theory of desire. The key objection to this theory was its inability to support any politics beyond those that promote creativity.

Deleuze and Guattari's politics consist of the injunction to create lines of flight and the only form of politics that their theory can reject thus becomes the blocking of such lines. The particular values of any post-sixties anti-oppression movements are thus irrelevant to Deleuze and Guattari, all that matters is whether these movements promote or block creativity.

A general issue for theories of difference is raised by the analysis of Deleuze and Guattari; how can a theory based on the right and necessity to differ and to keep making difference have any politics other than the protection and promotion of that right ? What is here introduced as the shadow of difference based politics is the nature of oppression and the possibility of a politics that can say more than 'creativity must be promoted'. The failure of Deleuze and Guattari's theory to support even their own politics, notably in their failure to distinguish capitalism from their theory,

underlines this problem because that politics clearly opposed by the left may not also be opposed by a difference based politics. The general problem raised by analysing Deleuze and Guattari's work is that the different values of post-sixties anti-oppression movements could become irrelevant to a left based on difference. This problem also implies that, if the left is to include different anti-oppression movements, a means of reintroducing the values of these movements is needed. The failure of difference in Deleuze and Guattari thus points to a reintroduction of value. Before considering this possibility in general it will help to examine whether problems identified in Lyotard's difference based theory lead to similar conclusions.

Lyotard's work can be regarded as an emblem of the left's collective memory because his intellectual career mirrors the disillusionment with Marxism and the consequent concern for political differences which centrally constitutes that memory. What is interesting is that, like Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard's work does not seem to advance beyond a despair that there are no values which can legitimate political movements in the wake of Marxism's demise and the subsequent conclusion that politics should celebrate the making of differences.

However, Lyotard also offers a distinct perspective to Deleuze and Guattari on difference's failures by

stressing the inherent instability of a difference based politics. In his terms philosophy's role, as guardian of the right to differentiate, is to detect any genre of discourse that prevents a phrase coming into existence. All linkages of phrases thus become not just the development of a particular genre but also the failure to develop a different genre and so all linkages must be detected and disrupted by philosophy. According to Lyotard, all theories and movements, by the mere fact that they and not some alternative exist, prevent differentiation and so should be disrupted.

Like Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard's work demonstrates that a pure commitment to difference reproduces no politics but the commitment to create difference. In addition, his work shows that a commitment to differentiation is an opposition to any stable genres of politics because stability will restrain differentiation. The results of analysing Deleuze and Guattari and Lyotard thus argue that in a difference based left the various oppressions that have emerged since the nineteen sixties would have to be judged according to their creativity and not according to struggles developed around their own oppression. Consequently, the commitment to difference made by Deleuze and Guattari and Lyotard seems to call for the reintroduction of values in order to retain differences between post-sixties anti-oppression struggles.

Difference in General.

The central problem revealed in both Deleuze and Guattari and Lyotard is that a politics of difference results in a politics concerned with nothing but difference. This is because all political differences are reduced to the one concern with creating difference. All the particular characteristics of post-sixties anti-oppression movements would thus be irrelevant to a difference based left. In order to develop this as a general conclusion, and to bring the work of the previous five chapters to a culmination, the shift of a politics from value to difference will now be traced in two stages; first, in the dissolution of value through the logic of exclusion and inclusion and, second, in the establishment of difference.

A politics based on unified values can be challenged through the logic of exclusion and inclusion that was outlined in chapter three. A political movement can then recognise that its unified value has been oppressing some social groups by excluding them from its liberatory struggle. For example, socialism can be based on a unified value derived from Marxism. This value could define oppression as the extraction of surplus value from workers by their employers combined with the subordination of all other social relations to this exploitation, as was discussed in chapter two. Socialism

would thus have a unified set of values which could order its theories and actions. However, this unity can be challenged by oppressions that are excluded by Marxist values. For instance, women may argue that their oppression centres on the home and the reproduction of life and not the factory and the production of commodities. Or black liberation groups might argue that they have developed political solidarities which cross the division of worker and employer. In both these cases a group that is excluded from socialist political action, and consequently from the socialist dream of liberation, asserts this exclusion and so challenges the values on which socialism is based.

The first stage to a politics based on difference is opened through the realisation by an oppressed group that its values oppress another oppressed group. It follows that if the original group is attempting to be an anti-oppression struggle then it must try to rid itself of the oppressions that it creates. The first stage may continue with the original group attempting to incorporate the differences raised by the excluded and oppressed groups. However, as noted in chapter three two complications can arise. First, the multiplication of these differences can appear to be endless as new and different exclusions continually emerge. Second, contradictions between these different oppressions can occur, making attempts to

incorporate all oppressions into one movement effectively like attempts to unite oppressor and oppressed.

For example, socialism may react to the challenges of feminism and black liberation by trying to include them. Several socialist groups have, at times, set up semi-autonomous women's organisations and there have been attempts to create a socialist-feminism that merges the concerns of the two movements. Similarly, there have been attempts to synthesise black liberation and socialism, for instance in the work of the journal Race and Class. However, these attempts establish the principle that it is wrong for socialism to exclude groups that are oppressed. It is then difficult to prevent any other excluded and oppressed group from asserting a right to be included within socialism. Groups oppressed by their sexual preference, physical or mental disability or locality can all demand that socialism expand itself to include them and so expansion can begin to appear endless.

A socialism that is being destabilised by expansion also faces a second problem because excluded groups can oppress each other. Conflict can break out as different excluded groups attempt to form an allegiance to one political movement and find themselves oppressed by other groups who are forming a similar allegiance. For example, feminism may have developed racist biases or black groups

homophobic views and any attempt to merge feminism, black liberation and gay and lesbian rights into socialism would effectively be trying to unite oppressor and oppressed within the one movement.

In the face of these problems a movement might simply reassert its original value. For example, socialism could simply return to its original view and reassert the primacy of workers' exploitation. However, this would also return socialism, or any movement, to the problems which initiated attempts to include the excluded. An alternative to resurrecting these problems would be for a movement to initiate the second stage of the transition to a politics of difference by questioning the need for a basis in unified values.

The alternative to the inherent oppression of values could then be posited as liberation created through affirming the invention of many different forms of politics. For example, rather than trying to harmonise the various oppressions of excluded and included groups according to Marxist values, socialism might become the process of fostering all struggles against oppression. The advantage of this change would be that socialism would never again be an oppressor because it would be based on the affirmation of all possible forms of anti-oppression struggle. All definitions of oppression would thus become part of the socialist struggle, that is if

they contribute to the further creation of differences, and so socialist liberation would aim to release all oppressed groups from the categorisations or values that oppress them.

If such changes were made then the homogenisation of anti-oppression struggles according to their allegiance to differentiation would be complete, because a difference based anti-oppression movement would make its goal the protection and promotion of differentiation. Values would be seen as blocks to this process and so would become not only lost to difference based politics but actually the opposition that must be fought. For example, the result of socialism realising that any categorisation that it creates will be oppressive is not just the loss of both its Marxist values and the particular values of other anti-oppression movements, but also means rejecting in principle any stable values because these create categorisations that oppress.

Paradoxically, the result of basing a politics in difference is a single struggle that judges all politics by the same yardstick. There is no basis for the values that informed feminism, black liberation or any other anti-oppression movement within a difference based left as these are exclusionary values. Instead, all forms of politics become the politics of difference. A general assessment of difference based politics thus leads to the

conclusion that difference forms an indifferent politics, which cannot distinguish between the various forms of anti-oppression struggles. A politics based purely on difference sees a single political world governed by differentiation.

In addition, an allegiance to differentiation not only homogenises all oppressions but might not even be able to exclude some groups the left clearly think of as oppressors. For example, in The Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels made the bourgeoisie seem paragons of differentiation.

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society....Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air" [Marx and Engels, 1848, 476]

It is true that Lyotard and Deleuze and Guattari are opposed to capitalism and seek to show that it is not compatible with their theories. However it has already been argued that, at least, Deleuze and Guattari fail to do this and, even if other attempts are more successful, it seems clear from Marx and Engels' words that capitalism's productivity exists as a shadow to difference based theories which demonstrates that the

ability to create difference is not necessarily liberatory. [Baudrillard, 1977, 193-196]

There are other objections to a difference based politics. For example, functionalism has been found in Deleuze and Guattari and idealism in Lyotard but, in contrast to indifferentism, these criticisms may be regarded as probable results of difference based theories. That is, functionalism can arise as a means of identifying what is new and idealism can be based on the claim that all differences have an equal right to exist and so both functionalism and idealism have a basis in difference, but it is not clear they are necessary results of difference. Nevertheless, despite these propensities, what is centrally important to a political assessment of difference is the homogenisation of all different forms of politics according to their productivity or creativity.

The failure of difference based politics lies in their inherent need to homogenise all forms of politics around the production of the new and so all the various post-sixties anti-oppression movements become reduced to the common denominator of difference. To the extent that difference based politics rid themselves of unified values, they become valueless and indifferent. Consequently, though difference provides the basis for an overall unified left, it does so at the price of the

values that originally led anti-oppression movements to challenge the left and seek their own liberation. Difference does not carry forward feminism, black liberation, socialism or any other anti-oppression movement into a new left but instead transforms them into the same struggle, the struggle to differentiate.

The Failure of Difference.

The analysis of difference based politics argues that for the left to be based on difference the left would have to discard its characteristic definitions of oppression in favour of the play of difference. The left's collective memory thus leads to confusion whether the left is based on value or difference. Value fails because of its inability to allow different forms of anti-oppression struggle equal legitimacy and difference fails because of its inability to incorporate the distinctive values of anti-oppression struggles.

To develop a path beyond this impasse it can be noted that Lyotard's intellectual trajectory wound from the politics of a particular value, that of the proletariat, along the hypothesis of difference to the philosophy of phrases and that a similar path exists in Deleuze and Guattari, with their attempt to renovate Marx and Freud in Anti-Oedipus moving into their philosophy of pure multiplicities in A Thousand Plateaus. In both cases a

critique of Marxism was broadened to a critique of any value based politics and then allegiance was given to difference. The distinction between the two paths is, perhaps, just that Lyotard takes the principle of difference as a necessity in order to prevent the creation of further oppression, whereas Deleuze and Guattari celebrate its liberatory powers. The paths of Lyotard and Deleuze and Guattari also mirror the left's collective memory because all three move from the critique of any politics based on value, beginning with Marxism, to the construction of a politics based on difference.

It was also noted that because difference based politics fail to encapsulate the characteristic values of the left a return to the left's values be the next step. However, the criticism of difference shows only that difference has failed to construct a positive form of politics, not that its critique of value is incorrect. Even if difference's homogenisation of left politics seems to call for a reinstitution of values, such a restitution is still blocked by the logic of exclusion and inclusion. Difference's criticisms of value remain valid, even if difference based politics fail.

What therefore emerges from the analysis of the left's collective memory is that both value and difference cannot legitimate the politics of a unified left because

they are locked into critiques of each other. Value fails because difference's critique, made up centrally of the logic of exclusion and inclusion, holds good and difference fails because it is not concerned with the values of anti-oppression movements only that they proliferate. Consequently, what can next be conducted is an analysis of the left's collective memory as if value and difference have moved into a constant debate with each other and not as if there is a linear progression from one to the other. This debate is the subject of chapter seven.

Chapter Seven: The Difference and Value Debate.

The Difference/Value Debate Introduced.

The left's collective memory claims that difference arose in the left through various anti-oppression movements asserting their difference first from class-based movements and then from each other. Difference-based theories and practices developed into both a general opposition to politics based on unified values and an assertion of the liberatory powers of differentiation. However, as the previous chapter argued, difference has failed to completely supersede value. Instead, difference's own failings seem to call for the reinstitution of value, even while the critique of value simultaneously remains valid.

An example of these interrelations between difference and value occurred early in 1991 at a one day feminist conference held in Edinburgh to discuss the future for women in Scotland. At this conference an initial plenary was held, followed by workshops and finally a concluding plenary. Until the final plenary a unified viewpoint of 'woman' was largely assumed as a basis for discussion over a range of topics. However, in the final plenary Scottish nationalism was raised and the identity of woman fractured. Women from the Socialist Workers Party brought up class, a lone woman said the word 'lesbian' because it

had not been said and, after some debate, nationalist women advised English women to go back south and declared English accents, whether feminine or masculine, to be an insult. What had been a largely harmonious conference broke up in anger and recrimination as the common identity of woman became a field of play for all the different politics that found voice. Nonetheless, in spite of this acrimonious ending, plans for a future women's conference were also laid by some participants.

At this conference both 'woman' as value and 'woman' as difference occurred and it is misleading to describe the conference without both concepts because its central story is the vacillation between the specificity of women as different within the field of politics and the specificity of many other oppressions as different within the field of feminism. This implies that the particular nature and structure of a debate between difference and value needs analysis, in order to understand both particular examples like this conference and the implications of the left's collective memory that neither difference nor value are an adequate basis for a revitalised left.

This chapter will therefore investigate the structure of a debate between difference and value that the left's collective memory implies underlies the interactions of theories and practices of the left. To do this a brief

abstract analysis of the difference/value debate will be given followed by an extended example, in the controversy over postmodernism in feminism, which will in turn provide the basis for further analysis. Though the analysis that follows will necessarily be abstract the debate that will be analysed itself exists in both political actions and theories, as shown by the conference described above. As with the whole of this thesis it is ideas that are analysed, but they are ideas that concern both practices and theories of anti-oppression movements.

Difference and Value.

Stated essentially the term 'value-based politics' refers to theories and practices built around defending and promoting a certain unified value. The term 'value' is employed rather than 'identity' because identity politics is one form of value politics. That is, it is possible to have a politics based on a unified value where that value does not refer to a unified subject or identity.

Ecological politics provides an example where the unified value can be 'nature' or 'ecology' and not a human identity. In difference-based politics an allegiance to creating differences, or differentiation, becomes the unifying core of a movement.

Two questions will be briefly asked to initially examine the relations between difference and value. First, what obvious paths might theories and practices move along in the difference/value debate ? Second, is there a point when value reveals difference and vice versa ?

Once a conflict or debate is entered by political movements around issues of difference and value there are four obvious paths that can be followed. Two uncompromising paths are formed simply by giving complete allegiance to one of the two poles. Theories and actions may try to base themselves exclusively on difference, as Deleuze and Guattari have done, or may affirm a particular unified value, such as that of Marxist-Leninism. There are also two moderate paths called recuperation and alliance. In recuperation a movement might try to deny the validity of a difference from its value, while also trying to incorporate elements of that difference within its value. For instance black caucuses or women's newspapers have at times been set up within socialist groups. In contrast, an alliance may develop through the acceptance by a movement of a plurality of different unified and self-sufficient movements between whom alliances can be struck. For example, there have been attempts to ally socialism and feminism, while simultaneously maintaining their independence.

Of these four possibilities the two moderate alternatives tend to collapse into the uncompromising paths because the contradiction between difference and value that they attempt to manage itself contradicts that management. Recuperation ultimately does not admit the legitimacy of difference but rather seeks to neutralise it by accommodating it, thus leaving in place the original problem which called a recuperation into existence. Alliances accept the legitimacy of difference but then reintroduce value by positing unified movements between whom alliances may be struck. However, as with recuperation, this merely displaces the issue because once the legitimacy of asserting difference is accepted, there is no means of preventing difference being asserted within movements thereby restarting the confrontation between difference and value.

The second question to be asked of the opposition of difference and value is whether they contain each other. Does the politics of difference also hold a politics of value and vice versa ?

The politics of difference, in its purest form, appears to hold no allegiance to any fixed value for it valorises only difference and the making of difference. Lyotard's short article "Answering the question: what is postmodernism ?" could stand as a manifesto for this

rejection of fixed values. In this article he identified the opposition:

"This is a period of slackening- I refer to the colour of the times. From every direction we are being urged to put an end to experimentation"
[Lyotard, 1982, 71]

and attacked them.

"The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given us as much terror as we can take. We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience. Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement, we can hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror, for the realization of the fantasy to seize reality. The answer is: Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honour of the name."
[Lyotard, 1982, 81-82]

Lyotard's statement is useful because its clarity reveals the terror beneath his own concepts in the war he is happy to declare on totality. Lyotard is willing and able to wage war and in doing so reveals the value he holds dear in the right to make differences. A similar conclusion could be drawn from Deleuze and Guattari and their principle of desiring-production, whose political opponents can be identified as those who would block the 'free flows' of creativity set in train by war-machines. In both cases the right to create difference is the value on which their politics is based.

In general, the extent to which creativity and the right to make differences is promoted against anything that might restrain these rights, reveals a commitment to

'rights of difference' as the unified value at the centre of a politics of difference. Difference has a value and it is the principle of creating differences.

Value reveals difference in a mirror-image of the way difference has revealed value. In difference the value of something is decided by reference to its novelty and its difference from whatever pre-existed it. In value what is different is decided by its relation to a central unified value. A politics based on a value thus judges the nature of theories and practices according to their sameness or difference to its value. This does not mean that value operates with only the two categories of same or other to its value. Rather, a unified value governs the distribution of difference within limits it sets. For instance, feminism often offers as its core a belief in the identity of women as oppressed by men but this does not mean that feminism can only deal with the categories of 'woman' and 'man'. Rather, feminism can organise differences between men and women on the basis of the identity 'woman' and so, for example, women in the family, black women, women at work and so on are differences that can be organised and related through the common value of woman. In value based politics difference is governed by value and is used to establish differences within a clearly defined framework.

In both difference and value there is a central value that governs the dispersion difference can create. Value and difference thus enclose each other and play similar roles in their respective structures.

On first analysis, the difference/value debate's abstract structure consists of two poles, value-based or difference-based theories and practices, around which four general paths are intertwined. These paths are allegiance to either difference or value, alliance of difference and value or the recuperation of one within the other. Further, the two poles have a similar structure but within those structures are opposites of each other. Both poles possess a principle of unity which defines the boundary of a movement and a principle of dispersion that recognises the differences between theories and practices within and without that boundary. The pole of value is made up of movements that have a unified value as their principle of unity and which subordinate the distribution of differences to this central value. The pole of difference is made up of movements that have the principle of differentiation as their central value and which distribute differences according to whether theories and practices promote the making of difference or not. To explore this abstract analysis of the difference/value debate further an extended example of its operation will be given in the confrontation within feminism over postmodernism.

Postmodernism and Feminism.

For the purposes of this example feminism will be taken to be the social movement that erupted across the Western world in the late nineteen-sixties which fought the oppression of women. Often called second-wave feminism, after the first wave of the suffragettes' struggle, it is one of the chief examples of the post-sixties anti-oppression movements posited by the left's collective memory. [Dahlerup, 1986: Evans, 1980: Rowbotham, 1990: Kaufman-McCall, 1983: Duchen, 1986]

Difference has arisen within feminism around several theoretical and practical issues. First, in the late nineteen-sixties there was the simple assertion of a difference from men and particularly from men in the New Left. [Dahlerup, 1986: Evans, 1980] Second, there has been a debate, called equality versus difference, which has discussed whether feminism should aim at equality with men's standards or the establishment of a standard based on the specificity of women. [Scott, 1988: Vogel, 1990] Third, there has been a debate over the nature of the unity that is referred to by the term woman, particularly over whether some women have been excluded from this unity. [Ardill and O'Sullivan, 1986: Omolade, 1980: Lazreg, 1988: Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983: Flax, 1990, 174-178: Hekman, 1990] Further debates around difference can possibly be located in feminism, however

it is the third debate, over the unity of woman, that will be examined here. [Barrett, 1987]

A practical example of such differences within feminism occurred in nineteen eighty-five in the London lesbian community over the right of lesbians who practice sadomasochism (SM) to use the newly opened London Lesbian and Gay Centre. As some lesbians held that SM practices embodied the brutality of male sexuality there was an attempt to exclude SM groups, including lesbian SM, from meeting and organising at the centre. Within a politicised lesbian community there then occurred a rift over what constituted a lesbian. SM lesbians were considered by some lesbians as 'repositories of male violence', by others as a legitimate difference within lesbianism and by themselves as 'sexual outlaws' who were opening up lesbianism to new and revolutionary possibilities. Against the unity of 'lesbian' three differences arose and entered into conflict with each other. After a sometimes bitter debate, a general meeting which included men voted to allow SM groups to meet in the Center and though this largely closed debate in the Center itself it also led to a split in the lesbian community when some women opposed to SM left the Centre. [Ardill and O'Sullivan, 1986]

As part of the realisation, created by incidents such as SM in the Lesbian and Gay Center, that women are divided

as well as united some feminists, particularly in France and the USA, turned to post-structuralist and postmodernist theory. It was argued by these feminists that such theories explore the concept of difference in a way that helps understanding of what it means for 'woman' to be an internally differentiated category. [Eisenstein and Jardine, 1980: Duchen, 1986: Nicholson, 1990: Hekman, 1990, chapter 1]¹ Such a perceived convergence of postmodernism and feminism led some to call for the establishment of a postmodern feminism. Susan Hekman wrote:

"Feminists have attempted to fashion new discourses about the feminine, discourses that resist the hegemony of male domination, that utilize the contradictions in these hegemonic discourses in order to effect their transformation. In this task the perspective of postmodernism is a help rather than a hindrance. Both postmodernism and feminism are counter discourses that challenge the modern episteme at its roots. This fundamental commonality suggests that an alliance between these two movements will further the aims of both." [Hekman, 1990, 190]

Postmodern feminists argue that to prevent feminism excluding some women from women's liberation a feminism based on difference and the protection of difference must

1 Following most feminists working in this area 'postmodern' will in this example stand for the varied thought which has come from France since the nineteen-sixties under several labels and associated with such thinkers as Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Lyotard and others. Both Benhabib and Flax claim this body of thought is based on the three 'deaths' of man, history and metaphysics, though others recognise the diversity and complexity that is being subsumed by such categorisations. [Benhabib, 1991, 137-138: Flax, 1990, 31-32: Butler, 1991, 150-151]

be created. Postmodern feminism, they argue, can develop a fully revolutionary politics which never makes black women or lesbians, or any of the as yet unseen differences within woman, feel excluded from the women's liberation movement. [Hekman, 1990: Butler, 1991, 159-161: Flax, 1990: Di Stefano, 1990, 65] For example, Judith Butler wrote:

"Identity categories are never merely descriptive, but always normative, and as such exclusionary. This is not to say the term 'women' ought not to be used, or that we ought to announce the death of the category. On the contrary, if feminism presupposes that 'women' designates an undesignateable field of differences, one that cannot be totalised or summarised by a descriptive identity category, then the very term becomes a site of permanent openness and resignifiability. I would argue that the rifts between and among women over the content of the term ought to be safeguarded and prized, indeed that this constant rifting ought to be affirmed as the ungrounded ground of feminist theory." [Butler, 1991, 160]

For Butler what should be important in feminism is the ability to create differences between women and never to summarise or totalise these differences, as this would oppress by excluding some women. Accordingly, feminism needs a basis in a process of 'constant rifting' or, put another way, in creating and sustaining differences between women. Instead of an originary definition which establishes who is the same as a woman and who is other than a woman, Butler's postmodern feminism would be based on a process that is open to all the differences that women can create. The male, binary opposition of the same and the other would be replaced by a feminist

understanding of woman as the endless process of contesting the nature of woman, thereby ensuring a radical openness to all manifestations of woman. [Flax, 1987, 642-643: Hekman, 1990, chapter 5: Di Stefano, 1990: Jardine, 1985: Jardine, 1980: Feral, 1980]

In general postmodern feminism argues that feminism needs:

"an equality that rests on differences- differences that confound, disrupt and render ambiguous the meaning of any fixed binary opposition." [Scott, 1988, 48]

Or, put another way, gender can be seen to function as:

"'a difference that makes a difference'" [Di Stefano, 1990, 78]

Unsurprisingly there have been feminists who do not agree with the postmodern diagnosis of the inherent repressiveness of Western rationality and who do not want to give up a unified concept of woman. The feminist replies to postmodern feminism tend to reassert the political need for a unified, rational subject that can act as the agent for social change. [Hartstock, 1987: Hartstock, 1990: Lazreg, 1988: Benhabib, 1991: Oliver, 1991: Tress, 1988] For example, anti-postmodern feminists sometimes argue that the postmodern dissolution of the Western or Enlightenment model of rationality is itself a ploy of male power.

"Somehow it seems highly suspicious that it is at the precise moment when so many groups have engaged in 'nationalisms' which involve redefinitions of the marginalised Others that suspicions emerge about the nature of the 'subject', about the possibilities for a general theory which can describe the world, about historical 'progress'. Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than as objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic ?" [Hartstock, 1990, 163]

For feminists like Nancy Hartstock it might be acceptable for the dominant male subject to decentre itself but the model of a neutral rationality governed by an informed subject is one that many subjected peoples, including women, aspire to achieve in order to gain control of their lives.

Ironically, the women who are 'other' than white, heterosexual and middle class, whose assertion of difference caused feminism to consider its internal differentiation in the first place, themselves often assert this anti-postmodern vision of politics. For example, Marnia Lazreg both attacks Western women for their failure grasp the specificity of Arabic and Islamic men and women's lives and history and simultaneously rejects as another colonialist trick the adoption of theories of difference in order to deal with these differences.

"Antihumanism has not provided any authority higher than itself that could monitor its excesses. Old-style humanism, in contrast, and despite its shortcomings, makes itself vulnerable to criticism by appealing to its unfulfilled promise of a more

reasonable rationalism or a more egalitarian universalism. Indeed, the universalistic claim to a supracultural human entity embodied in reason provided colonialised societies with the tool necessary to regain their freedom. Colonialised women and men were willing to give up their lives in order to capture their share of humanity celebrated but denied by colonial powers....It is not accidental that the rise of antihumanism coincided with the collapse of the French colonial empire, more specifically with the end of the Algerian war (and it was at this time that both Foucault and Derrida began publishing)." [Lazreg, 1988, 99]

Anti-postmodernists claim that women, and other colonialised subjects, should not be deprived of the power that can be derived from Enlightenment concepts just as these people are gaining this power. The struggle of women to name and constitute themselves as active political subjects is thus seen as the necessary basis for feminism, to which postmodernism is a clear threat to this subject. [Benhabib, 1991: Oliver, 1991: Hekman, 1990, chapter 5] For example, Seyla Benhabib concedes much of Butler's postmodern criticism of the concept of a unified, autonomous and self-conscious subject but she also states that:

"nevertheless we must still argue that we are not merely extensions of our histories, that vis a vis our own stories we are in the position of author and character at once. The situated and gendered subject is heteronomously determined but still strives toward autonomy. I want to ask how in fact the very project of female emancipation would even be thinkable without such a regulative principle of agency, autonomy and selfhood ?" [Benhabib, 1991, 140]

Benhabib and others argue that a unified concept of 'woman' is needed by feminism. They claim that the

assertion of other subjectivities within woman does not demand the complete dissolution of the rational subject, but is rather a call for sensitivity to what woman may exclude and for openness to appropriate revisions. In this way Benhabib and others hope to retain 'woman' as a value on which feminism can be based. [Benhabib, 1991: Lazreg, 1988: Tress, 1988: Hartstock, 1990]

The two poles of difference and value are clear in feminists who either reject or accept postmodernism and its political consequences. Postmodern feminists want to give feminism a basis in a process of creating differences, while anti-postmodern feminists want to retain a value in the category or subject of 'woman'. There is also a third group of feminists who have sought a middle way between a total dissolution of the subject, with the attendant possibility of a failure of feminism in relativism, or the reassertion of a rational subject who has always previously been a man who protected male power.

Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson are an example of this middle way and they argue for a fusion of postmodernism and feminism through a recognition of both the limitations of each and what each offers the other. In opposition to feminists who wish to base feminism totally on difference Fraser and Nicholson demand the retention of feminism's ability to make normative judgements based

on values and in opposition to feminists who advance an uncritical concept of woman they reject any 'universalising' or 'totalising' concepts as potentially repressive. [Fraser and Nicholson, 1990, 19-34: Fraser, 1991, 175]

On the one hand, Fraser and Nicholson are unwilling to fully commit themselves to postmodernism because they believe many politically useful genres are thrown out by it. They wrote:

"Lyotard...goes too quickly from the premise that Philosophy cannot ground social criticism to the conclusion that criticism must itself be local, *ad hoc*, and nontheoretical. As a result, he throws out the baby of large historical narrative with the bathwater of philosophical metanarrative and the baby of social-theoretical analysis of large-scale inequalities with the bathwater of reductive Marxian class theory....Suppose one began not with the condition of Philosophy, but with the nature of the social object one wished to criticise. Suppose, further, that one defined that object as the subordination of women to and by men. Then, we submit, it would be apparent that many of the genres rejected by postmodernists are necessary for social criticism." [Fraser and Nicholson, 1990, 25-26]

On the other hand, Fraser and Nicholson are unwilling to commit themselves to a single unified concept of woman because:

"In recent years, poor and working-class women, women of colour, and lesbians have finally won a wider hearing for their objections to feminist theories which fail to illuminate their lives and address their problems. They have exposed the earlier quasi-metanarratives...as false extrapolations from the experience of the white, middle-class, heterosexual women who dominated the beginnings of the second wave." [Fraser and Nicholson, 1990, 33]

Fraser and Nicholson argue that feminists do not need to abandon historical narratives or analysis of 'societal macrostructures', as long as such analyses are recognised to be limited and non-universalistic. Accordingly, the belief in 'unitary notions of woman' must be replaced with 'plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one strand among others'. [Fraser and Nicholson, 1990, 34-35] Fraser and Nicholson's alliance of postmodernism and feminism would accordingly retain a notion of 'woman' but would recognise each such notion, and its attendant historical narratives and social analyses, as limited and partial. Feminism would then become plural in "the practice of feminisms", without succumbing to the ahistoricism and relativism of postmodernism or the essentialism and exclusionary practices of a universalised category of woman. [Fraser and Nicholson, 1990, 35]

Fraser and Nicholson's middle-way asserts that postmodernism must be subsumed within feminism but that this can best be done through a selective alliance. The unified value of 'woman' can remain but it is historicised and recognised as necessarily partial. In this way feminism would be based on a value for 'woman', and not on the continual invention of difference, but that value is allied with postmodernism by opening it to differentiation through a recognition of its limited nature. Difference is recuperated under value in a

general sense but this recuperation is itself created by allying aspects of value with aspects of difference.

Fraser and Nicholson thus fashioned a 'mid-way' between difference and value from a combination of the two paths of alliance and recuperation.

Fraser and Nicholson's theory suffers the difficulties of all middle-ways because it can be criticised by both the two opposing poles it tries to combine. Postmodern feminists can argue that masculine values, such as the macro-social theories Fraser and Nicholson want to retain, are still being used to establish feminism and so they can be accused of not being thorough enough in their critique of masculine values. Anti-postmodern feminists can argue that there seems to be nothing to unite all the feminisms posited by Fraser and Nicholson as one feminist movement. Fraser and Nicholson's conception of 'woman' seems so limited that it is hard to imagine what or who it unites as feminist.

Three different positions can be identified in the debate within feminism over postmodernism: an allegiance to postmodernism and difference, an allegiance to 'woman' and value and an attempt to ally difference and value. The debate itself developed from the realisation that the category 'woman' not only could not be assumed but could also actually be oppressive. This led some feminists to reject categorisation altogether in favour of difference

as a basis for feminism. Against the dissolution of a unified category of woman in favour of woman as a principle of making difference some 'value feminists' reassert an allegiance to a unified value. They argue there is a need for women to name themselves and to join a movement which represents them and that this can only be achieved through the development of a value for 'woman'. Further, they accuse postmodernism of a political indifference to women that results from exploding the category of woman. However, the reassertion of an allegiance to value does not necessarily deal with the objections to feminism which postmodern feminists found compelling. Instead what has already been rejected by postmodern feminists is simply reasserted because of its political efficacy and the perceived failure of postmodernism. As an alternative, some feminists resisted a choice between value and difference and fashioned a middle way. However, this path is also open to the criticisms value and difference make of each other.

At this point conflict between the three alternatives within the feminist debate over postmodernism begins to look endemic, because each of the three positions possesses a ready made critique of each other to which their own beliefs provided an answer. It is not just that they all have criticisms of each other but that implied by each criticism is an answer that is already at play in the debate. It is therefore obvious where any participant

in the debate could go for answers if they found criticisms that are raised compelling. For example, if a feminist is disturbed by making woman into a process of differentiation then she is immediately faced with the alternatives of value or the mid-way. She can then seek an answer in these alternatives that is compatible with the reasons she came to examine 'woman as differentiation' in the first place. In this way the debate is never stalemated and always offers possibilities within itself for change, while never moving beyond the poles of difference and value. The example of feminism and postmodernism thus posits the difference/value debate as being endless while simultaneously avoiding a stalemate. From this claim a critique of the difference/value debate can now be developed.

Paralysed Motion.

The endless motion that is possible in the feminism and postmodernism debate can also be identified in the generalised difference/value debate. As already argued, the two poles of difference and value are mirror images of each other in that they are structured in a similar way but have their central principle of unity reversed in relation to each other. As such, difference and value produce problems which are the mirror image of each other and also offer solutions to each other's problems.

Value is based around a central unified definition of what a theory or a politics prizes. Value's difficulty is that in establishing such a unity it must include some things and exclude others. The problem for any value-based politics is thus that its central principle can be accused of being inherently oppressive. In short, when there is a same there will always, necessarily, be others who can claim to be oppressed by being made other.

Difference-based theories and practices offer an answer to this problem of value's inherent oppressiveness because difference excludes no position as an other. Difference-based systems argue that if any static definition is inherently oppressive then only the endorsement of continual transgressions can be liberatory and so, for example, feminism must become a process of continual rifting. However, though no-one is excluded a problem for difference-based theories emerges because difference dissolves all movements into a homogenous mass of creativity. Difference-based theories and practices do not oppress by excluding but neither do they seem to liberate or fight any particular oppression because they are always demanding change. Differences between theories and practices accordingly matter less than their ability to produce difference and, paradoxically, difference-based systems produce political indifference.

Value-based systems clearly offer an answer to the indifference of difference. Perhaps a modified sense of value, as when Fraser and Nicholson make values explicitly limited and partial, could be used but some form of value seems the obvious cure for theories and practices which have been homogenised according to the sole criteria of difference. Value-based systems thus find themselves able to criticise and move beyond difference-based systems in a mirror image of the claims of difference-based systems make against them. Both poles thus possess criticisms of each other and answers to those criticisms.

At this point the difference/value debate is closed between the two poles of difference and value. Set in a particular anti-oppression movement there is scope for such a debate to be conducted with each twist and turn offering a move beyond the previous position but in fact leading to a new articulation of difference versus value. The nature of the difference/value debate is not only that it will be inconclusive but that it will also always offer both the hope of resolution and a possible path to that resolution. The difference/value debate can now be characterised as one of paralysed motion because there is always motion but there is also the paralysis of a debate that can never be finalised.

There are two obvious reactions within anti-oppression movements to the paralysed motion of the difference/value debate. First, there is simply disillusionment. This can occur when movements are simply abandoned by people who once saw their importance but who become exhausted by internal disputes over the values and differences of a movement. Second, there is the fragmentation that can easily follow from disputes over difference and value. Difference, as it erupts within movements, by its nature seeks a fragmentation but if a movement then seeks to resist this fragmentation through the establishment of some value it finds, inevitably, that some group, practice or theory is excluded by this value and so fragments away. Fragmentation seems an inevitable by-product of the difference/value debate.

These two consequences, disillusionment and fragmentation capture the endemic nature of problems for oppositional movements that the difference/value debate can create. Within this debate a movement is either caught within paralysed motion or it fragments into smaller and smaller chunks or its members drift away disillusioned or exhausted by a process which is full of passion yet always seems to lead to similar problems. Consideration of a third reaction is therefore necessary and this would be to examine what assumptions the difference/value debate is itself based on and whether the debate can be transcended through rejection or modification of them.

The Third Reaction.

What gives value's critique of difference and difference's critique of value force ? This question arises because if feminists criticise Marxism for being sex-blind then what makes this a fault of Marxism ? Marxists could shrug their collective shoulder and reply that 'we are not developing a theory of women's oppression or directly trying to liberate women and so cannot be criticised for not doing so'. Marxists could then affirm women's difference by claiming that Marxist theory and practice deals specifically with economic oppression, women's oppression thus occurs in Marxism only when it is related to the economy and so a movement devoted specifically to women is needed for women to be liberated. However, such a response has not usually been considered legitimate, if it has been thought of at all, within the left, as has already been seen in the force held for feminists by the accusation that second-wave feminism excludes black women or non-heterosexual women. That a theoretical shrug of the shoulders has not constituted a legitimate political position indicates that within the left there is an underlying assumption that all oppressions should be encompassed in any one understanding of oppression.

An example of this assumption of 'one oppression' is given by Negri, who considers it a constituting factor of

modern politics and philosophy. When discussing Spinoza's innovations in political theory he notes that Hobbes's assumption of the 'war of all against all' is:

"insuperable when we approach it from the perspective of individuality. Therefore...the Spinozian dislocation must also found a new ontological horizon... This horizon is collective. It is the horizon of collective freedom, of a nonproblematized collectivity.... The idea of the *multitudo* transforms what was a Renaissance, utopian, and ambiguous potentiality into a project and a genealogy of collectivity, as a conscious articulation and constitution of the whole, of the totality. The revolution and its boundary are therefore, in Spinoza, the terrain on which an extraordinary operation is founded, the prefiguration of the fundamental problem of the philosophy of the subsequent centuries: the constitution of collectivity as praxis." [Negri, 1981b, 20-21]

What Negri outlines as Spinoza's political horizon of the collective constituted by practice is close to the key assumption which lies behind the difference/value debate. That is, Negri's Spinoza argues for an ontology which offers 'truly revolutionary being', which can itself be understood as the capacity to fundamentally transform society, to a collective which is constituted through people's activity or praxis. The ontological framework of the difference/value debate is also made up of this horizon of the practically constituted collective which alone bears the ability to reconstruct society, as this assumption is the basis on which difference and value can confront each other.

If it is assumed that one collective must be constituted in order for society to be fundamentally transformed, then the nature of that collective is crucial to liberatory politics. Difference and value then offer two ways of articulating the nature of this collective and so have a common object over which they can struggle. Put another way, what makes the difference/value debate important for anti-oppression movements is that its two poles embody both theoretical and practical issues which occur within movements, but what keeps these issues relevant, and therefore enmeshes movements in paralysed motion, is the assumption that the truly revolutionary political movement is both singular and so constituted through value or difference.

Once the assumption is made that revolution can only be conducted by one collective then a shrug of the shoulders, in reply to the accusation that an anti-oppression movement is not dealing with all oppressions, is impossible because the shrug would mean excluding a group from the one revolutionary collective. If there is only one revolutionary movement then it must include all anti-oppression struggles or some oppressions would not be confronted by the revolutionary movement and so would survive the revolution. Accordingly, difference and value based theories and practices cannot shrug their shoulders at each other but must contest with each other the nature of the revolutionary collective. Difference and value's

objections to each other have force for each other because they concern the way society can be transformed.

A paradox appears here because is it not simply true, as noted by the left's collective memory, that there is more than one anti-oppression movement and does this not refute the claim that only one revolutionary collective is being assumed by left politics involved in the difference/value debate ? It is, of course, true that there are many different anti-oppression movements but it is the framework that these movements exist in, and so how their expectations and actions are structured, that is relevant here. There is no contradiction between the existence of many movements and the claim that all these movements believe fundamental political change will come when a single revolutionary collective is constituted and so structure their theories and practices according to this assumption.

Analysis of the difference/value debate thus implies that liberatory politics has failed to take account of the emergence of many anti-oppression movements because it has failed to question the assumption of one revolutionary collective. Indeed, the anti-oppression movements have also failed to take full account of the implications of their own rise, as they have retained the ontological horizon which allows only one collective to be revolutionary.

An example of this failure to question the assumption of one collective, even while simultaneously endorsing the rise of many anti-oppression movements, is given by Guattari and Negri in their nineteen eighty-five call for the renewal of the spirit of communism. Guattari and Negri note that feminists have made reproduction a central political issue, that students have raised issues of the 'non-material labour force' and they endorse in general 'movements of the marginal', but they also believe that all these different movements contribute to the one struggle. They wrote:

"It is not a paradox to say that only the marginalities are capable of universality, or, if you prefer, of movements which create universality....Truth 'with a universal meaning' is constituted by the discovery of the friend in its singularity, of the other in its irreducible heterogeneity, of the interdependent community in the respect for its appropriative values and ends. This is the 'method' and the 'logic' of the marginalities which are thus the exemplary sign of a political innovation corresponding to the revolutionary transformations called forth by the current productive arrangements.

Every marginality, by placing its stakes on itself, is therefore the potential bearer of the needs and desires of the large majority." [Guattari and Negri, 1985, 42]

The marginals are conceived by Guattari and Negri as bearers of the universal struggle in relation to the 'current productive arrangements'. In this way the specificity of anti-oppression movements is dissolved by assuming there is a common revolutionary struggle which these movements are privileged to construct. Guattari and Negri then widen communism far beyond its own specificity

by claiming that all social relations have been taken over by capitalist production, that all life is like factory work and so is in need of a communist revolution. [Guattari and Negri, 1985, 21-22 & 49] Guattari and Negri, for all their whole-hearted support of movements of the marginal, fail to respect the specificity of these struggles, fail to analyse what these specificities might mean for a communist revolution and so recuperate anti-oppression movements into a generalised communist struggle.

The confrontation around SM lesbians in the London Lesbian and Gay Center has similar features for, without the assumption that lesbians form the one collective, the accusation that SM lesbians were not 'true' lesbians would have been irrelevant. There could only be a battle over the definition of lesbian because at some level it was assumed there had to be one lesbian movement. Accordingly, different forms of lesbianism had to be unified or dispelled and so SM lesbianism had to be included or excluded. [Ardill and O'Sullivan, 1986, 54-57]

A third example of the assumption of one revolutionary collective occurs in theories of difference which assume a unified political horizon, despite an overtly anti-totalist stance. For instance Deleuze and Guattari transfer the unity of struggle into a process,

differentiation, but still articulate one form of oppositional politics in the one struggle to free desire and creativity. They can accordingly be heavily prescriptive in demanding that everyone create difference because they want to constitute the revolutionary collective on the basis of differentiation.

The difference/value debate within oppositional movements is based on an ontological framework which was essentially established as early, according to Negri at least, as the differences between Spinoza and Hobbes. The struggles over difference within and between oppositional movements that have emerged since the sixties have thus remained on the same political ground as theories and practices of value and so have engaged them in political conflict. Without the assumption of one revolutionary collective confrontations between difference and value could evaporate in a multiple shrugging of shoulders.

The Difference/Value Debate Concluded.

The difference/value debate in the field of oppositional politics is made of two poles. One consists of theories and practices which are based on a unified value and the other is of theories and practices which are united around a principle of differentiation. The two poles of difference and value are related to each other through a framework which posits that truly revolutionary being is

possessed by a collective which is constituted through practice. Difference and value dispute with each other the nature of political change by disputing whether this revolutionary collective can be constituted by value-based theories and practices or by difference-based systems.

Within the difference/value debate each pole possesses a powerful critique of the other and provides mirror like answers to those critiques, so ensuring there is always an answer to a criticism made by a difference or value-based system at play in the debate. The result is that the difference/value debate is always fluid but also can never be finalised; the debate is both paralysed and constantly in motion. Two consequences of this are the disillusionment of participants in movements, as problems are finalised and then reopened only to be repeated in a new guise, and fragmentation, as theories and practices continually break down and reconstruct their unity.

The final part of this chapter examined the ontological assumption of one revolutionary collective that underpins the force the objections that difference and value make of each other. This assumption has been implicitly questioned by the number and practice of post-sixties anti-oppression movements, but this questioning has not been understood clearly enough nor examined deeply enough to progress beyond the difference/value debate.

Chapter 8: The Nature of Emancipatory Collectives.

The Ontology of Emancipatory Collectives.

The present topic is not a definition of all forms of social movements or of a new, twenty-first century society, but is restricted to the definition of an emancipatory politics that can transcend the difference/value debate.¹ To begin this definition it can be noted that the post-sixties emergence of many different anti-oppression movements challenges the underlying principle of the difference/value debate by demonstrating there is more than one collective that can be liberatory. The left's collective memory implies that emancipatory politics cannot assume that liberation will be defined and carried out through the formation of one mass struggle. The challenge is thus an ontological one because it affects what can be considered politically progressive from a left-wing viewpoint; there is a challenge to the Being of the left.

In this context a political ontology will be defined as a framework that outlines the nature of political forces that can fundamentally transform society. A political ontology thus defines the Being of revolution. For example, it has already been argued that the ontology

¹ Emancipation, and its opposite oppression, should now be assumed to have a narrow technical meaning which will be defined in the rest of this thesis.

underlying the difference/value debate claims that revolutionary being is possessed by one collective constituted through practice. In contrast, the vision of emancipatory politics that will now be developed will posit many different revolutionary struggles as the basis from which an overall view of politics may be constructed.

The ontological reversal from one liberation to many emancipations establishes the basic principle of the new political ontology that will now be developed. This ontology will be called the ontology of emancipatory collectives. To adequately develop it the nature of emancipatory collectives and the structure in which they exist, that is the relationships between them, must be fully examined. The nature of emancipatory collectives will be defined in this chapter, initially through an analysis of Alberto Melucci's theory of social movements, while the following chapter will analyse the relations between collectives.

Melucci and New Social Movements.

The work of Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci represents, in some senses, a culmination of the sociology of post-sixties social movements because he develops both criticisms and a synthesis of its two broad currents. The first current is European, developing

chiefly from the work of Alain Touraine but also from Jurgen Habermas, and the second is chiefly from the USA in such schools as resource mobilisation theory and relative deprivation theory. [Melucci, 1983; Foss and Larkin, 1986: Diani, 1992]² Melucci calls the post-sixties anti-oppression movements 'new social movements' and an examination of his theory will provide the basis for a theory of emancipatory collectives.

Melucci claims that nearly all previous theories of social movements have conformed to 'dualistic thinking' because they make social movements either 'an effect of structural conditions or an expression of values and beliefs'. Melucci rejects this dualism and so rejects the identification of social movements by their objective position in society or through the beliefs of their members. [Melucci, 1989, 17-20] Melucci also argues that the work of Touraine, Habermas and resource mobilisation theory have moved beyond this dualism but each separated the question of how a social movement formed from why it formed and then addressed only one of these questions. Touraine and Habermas examined why and resource mobilisation theory how, with all mistaking the answer to

2 Mario Diani notes four main trends in the sociology of social movements: the collective behaviour perspective, resource mobilisation theory, the political process perspective and the new social movements approach. The first three are chiefly associated with the U.S.A., with the fourth being considered European and so can be reconciled with the view that there are two broad trends in social movement theory. [Diani, 1992, 1-7]

one question for an answer to both. Despite these shortcomings, Melucci claims that this work created a sceptical paradigm which no longer treated social movements as things and did not take everything said by such movements at face value. [Melucci, 1983, 820-822]

To develop this sceptical paradigm Melucci suggests that movements should be treated as 'socially constructed collective action systems'. He claims that members of social movements negotiate their actions through three poles of a collective action system. These poles are:

"the *goals* of their action; the *means* to be utilized; and the *environment* within which their action takes place." [Melucci, 1989, 26]

As collective actions are negotiated both between and within these axes a plurality of possible meanings exists across any collective action system. That is, the constructed unity of a collective action system itself contains a plurality of meanings. Melucci argues that it is consequently impossible to use the naive empirical unity of a new social movement as a starting point for analysis of its collective action systems, because any assumption of unity would obscure a movements' internal complexity. In addition, he claims that the common assumption that social movements are unified actors on the stage of society is a reification of gross empirical observation which collapses on closer inspection and that it makes the assumption that there is something like a

'deep mind' to a movement. [Melucci, 1989, 21-26; Melucci, 1983, 820-825] Instead of presuming that a movement is unified Melucci argues that prior to empirical work into new social movements an analytical definition of new social movements is required which can guide research and so uncover a movement's complexity.

Melucci's analytical definition of a new social movement is that it is a specific class of collective action which has the three dimensions of solidarity, conflict and transgression. He claims that these dimensions are 'entirely analytical', by which means they are theoretical hypotheses which can be used to separate new social movements from other collective phenomena with which they are often confused, such as protest. [Melucci, 1985, 715-716] Solidarity is the mutual recognition by actors that they are part of one social unit. It is the acknowledgement of a shared identity. Conflict is a struggle with an adversary over some commonly desired values or goods.³ Transgression occurs when a social movement's actions violate the boundaries of a system, thereby pushing the system beyond the range of variations that it can tolerate without altering its structure. This last dimension raises the nature of the system, which Melucci calls 'complex society', that is transgressed.

³ Melucci is careful to distinguish his notion of conflict from a Marxist notion of contradiction by stressing that conflict concerns a fight between opponents over an object.

[Melucci, 1989, 29-30; Melucci, 1983, 825-826; Melucci, 1980, 202-203]

For Melucci complex society emerges from a qualitative transformation in the role production played in industrial capitalism in that production has come to include all the social relationships that accompany the production of objects. He calls this expanded form of production 'social production'. [Melucci, 1989, 186; Melucci, 1978a, 97; Melucci, 1980, 203-210] He also notes that the control of social production has changed from being the property of one group to being under the 'jurisdiction of giant apparatuses of political and economic decision making'. Consequently, conflict between two stable classes, in the Marxist sense, has dissolved into a 'network of oppositions'. This means that capitalist development can no longer be guaranteed by the control of both a working class and the resources needed for production and so, in order to maintain capitalist development, growing intervention is needed in social relationships. The controllers of capital have thus become concerned with the management of 'symbolic systems, identity and the definition of needs'. Melucci calls the systems which manage this extension of capital's interests the 'symbolic codes' of society. [Melucci, 1978a, 100; Melucci, 1978b, 179; Melucci, 1983, 826-827]

"Complex societies no longer have an 'economic' basis, they produce by an increasing integration of economic, political and cultural structures. 'Material' goods are produced and consumed with the mediation of huge informational and symbolic systems." [Melucci, 1983, 826]

Melucci's overall view can be encapsulated in his claim that "Power based upon material production is...no longer central" because production itself is dependant on a reality that is increasingly determined by information organised and controlled through symbolic codes.

[Melucci, 1989, 185] Though Melucci regards his depiction of complex society and its codes as incomplete, he also insists that the features that he has identified are of fundamental importance to that society. [Melucci, 1989, 83-84 & 184-186; Melucci, 1983, 826-827]

Complex society is the system that is transgressed by social movements. Transgression thus consists of attempts to overturn the codes and this occurs when movements:

"no longer operate as characters but as *signs*, in the sense that they translate their action into symbolic challenges that overturn the dominant cultural codes. Movements also reveal the irrationality and bias of cultural codes by acting at the same levels (of information and communication) as the new forms of technocratic power." [Melucci, 1989, 75]

So far Melucci has argued that analysis of new social movements should be guided by the three dimensions of solidarity, conflict and transgression and have as its aim the revelation of the many possible collective actions, that is the many possible negotiations of goals,

means and environments, that make up a movement. Amid this internal diversity it is important to identify the means by which a movement's unity is constructed. Melucci argues that the unity of a social movement is created by individuals through 'negotiated interactions' which produce a collective identity.

"Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place. The process of constructing, maintaining and altering a collective identity provides the basis for actors to shape their expectations and calculate the costs and benefits of their action." [Melucci, 1989, 34]

Melucci identifies three dimensions to the production of such a collective identity. First, there is the formulation of cognitive frameworks concerning the goals, means and environment of collective action. That is, people create a common understanding of the three poles of collective action. Second, relations between actors must be 'activated', or brought into existence, so that actors can communicate, negotiate and make decisions. Last, emotional investments have to be made which will enable actors to recognise in each other a common feeling. [Melucci, 1989, 35] Melucci also notes that action on the basis of that identity is never solely the result of instrumental cost-benefit calculations and the collective identity will never be totally negotiable

because actors make emotional investments in the collective identity of a movement. [Melucci, 1989, 35-36]

In summary, Melucci defines new social movements as collective action systems that can be identified on the basis of a three part analytic definition made up of solidarity, conflict and transgression. Unity between these three aspects of a movement is constructed by the individuals in it negotiating a collective identity. This identity is created by actors through the three processes of formulating cognitive frameworks, activating relationships and investing emotions. Both these three dimensions of collective identity and the three aspects of the analytic definition of social movements occur across a multipolar action system made up of the goals of the movement, the means of the movement and the environment of the movement. Melucci specifies what defines a new social movement and then how that definition is constructed by its actors and in each case he provides a three part structure. This structure can now be illustrated through a brief examination of his account of the women's movement.⁴

Melucci defined feminist collective action through solidarity as women, conflict with men and the

⁴ This account is essentially a summary of Melucci's but certain categories are introduced for the sake of clarity. See Melucci, 1989, 93-95; Evans, 1980; Rowbotham, 1989; Nicholson, 1990.

transgression of patriarchal structures. All three were also more closely defined through their part in helping women to break with a 'narrow domestic identity'. Women's collective actions were initially related to the goals, means and environment of social policies for equality between men and women. That is, Melucci argues that the women's movement initially coalesced around demands for equality with men which would break women out of their domestic role. [Melucci, 1989, 93]

To achieve this coalescence a collective identity of 'woman' was constructed by women developing cognitive frameworks organised around histories of women and analyses of women's condition, by women developing relationships, especially through women who were experienced in organisation through their involvement in the new left, and by women promoting affective investments in a collective sense particularly through consciousness raising groups. Having identified the three main sources of the evolving collective identity which underlay the actions of the women's movement Melucci then argued that as women began to gain benefits from the political system the goals, means and environment of women's collective actions began to split into two main streams. This led to what Melucci terms a 'specific form of solidarity' among women that was characterised by a voyage from claims for equality with men to radical feminism and self-consciousness. [Melucci, 1989, 93-94]

The first stream of women's collective action Melucci calls feminism and it continued the original emphasis on equality through social policy by conducting such actions as research on gender and campaigns for equal rights. The second stream was a new social movement called by Melucci the 'women's movement'. This movement diverged from feminism by negotiating its collective identity around notions of 'female difference', instead of a concern for equality with men, and by creating a "'women's culture', which was submerged and woven into the fabric of daily life,...which sustained and nourished women's mobilisations". [Melucci, 1989, 95] The women's movement thus became less visible but far more diverse than feminism by concerning itself with the cultural dimensions of society.

In this example all the key elements of Melucci's theory can be seen. However, to complete the core of his theory of new social movements a final distinction must be made between the latency and visibility of social movements. This distinction will also allow the distinction of new social movements from mobilisations.

Melucci points out that many collective actions of new social movements are carried out invisibly, particularly in the ongoing construction of a collective identity. He argues that the processes of creating cognitive frameworks, activating relationships and making emotional

investments all proceed much of the time out of the public arena, in the sense that there may be no public conflict over these collective actions. Consciousness raising groups are an example of this invisibility because they create a private forum in which people can develop the collective identity of a movement. Melucci then argues that the visibility and latency of new social movements' collective actions should be distinguished depending on whether an action involves public conflict or not. [Melucci, 1989, 70-73 & 78-79: Melucci, 1985, 798-801]

In contrast to the latency or visibility of a social movement Melucci argues that mobilisations will be public actions for specific goals, will not be maintained beyond those goals and will draw on the already existing networks that make up social movements. He notes that mobilisations will often be managed by temporary organisations which provide the necessary financial and technical resources. [Melucci, 1989, 78-9: Melucci, 1985, 815] There is thus a distinction between the latency and visibility of new social movements and a mobilisation. He wrote:

"In most discussions, references to the movements' political effects and organizational tactics are commonly mistaken for the collective forms of mobilization which develop around specific issues. But movements live in another dimension: in the everyday network of social relations, in the capacity and will to reappropriate space and time, and in the attempt to practice alternative life-

styles. This dimension is not marginal or residual. Rather, it is the appropriate response to new forms of control that no longer correspond solely to state action." [Melucci, 1989, 71]

Mobilisations are short term campaigns around a specific issue that draw on the already existing networks of social movements. For example, Melucci argues that it is impossible to understand the vitality of the peace movement mobilisations of the late seventies and early eighties without also understanding the latent action that already existed in the submerged networks of the youth, womens, ecological and other movements. In contrast a social movement's actions may be visible or latent depending on whether or not they involve public conflict. [Melucci, 1989, 70-73 & 78-79; Melucci, 1985, 798-801]⁵

In summary, Melucci defines new social movements as collective actions that are characterised by solidarity, conflict and transgression. The unity of movements, which is the unity of a plurality of meanings and actions, is created by actors constructing a collective identity across a multipolar system of action. In addition, much

5 It should be noted that in some of Melucci's work the visibility of a movement seems to be equated with a mobilisation, though in other parts there seem to be three separate terms. [Melucci, 1989, 70-73; Melucci, 1985, 800-801] The separation into three terms is useful because it provides a distinction between a particular social movement being in public conflict (visibility) or acting but not in public (latency) and a particular campaign in which several movements are involved (mobilisation).

of the collective action that creates a collective identity may proceed outside of the public arena, meaning that a distinction must be drawn between a movement's latency, its visibility and the participation of several movements in a mobilisation.

Melucci's theory of new social movements stresses their internal plurality by noting the multiplicity of meanings and actions that a movement can develop and still retain sense as a movement. Melucci then makes the process of actors negotiating a collective identity around the goals, means and environments of a movement the means by which a movement is unified. However, Melucci also bases the pluralism of movements in a unitary society which is independent of movements and which they transgress.

Melucci's account of the source of unity for new social movements is accordingly confusing because by defining its own sense of the environment it operates in movements draw in and destabilise Melucci's assumption of a unified society thereby, in turn, dislocating his definition of transgression. Examination of this problem will allow the identification of problems in Melucci's theory which, when confronted, will provide a theory of emancipatory collectives.

Melucci and The Unity of Society.

Melucci rejects attempts to explain new social movements according to their objective position in the structure of society. However, he also wishes to articulate their role in such structures, as is clear in his analysis of movements as signs confronting the codes of complex society. Melucci's attitude to the social structure and social movements is thus ambiguous. On the one hand, he rejects identifying social structures in order to define the 'objective conditions' from which movements are born but, on the other hand, he does identify society's fundamental structure and the relationship of movements to it. [Melucci, 1989, 12 & 40]

This ambiguity arises from two sources. First, Melucci claims there is a single unified society, which is qualitatively different from industrial capitalism, within which social movements have a place. Second, he argues that new social movements are negotiated collective action systems which define the environment in which they operate. Put together the result of these two claims is that the objective definition of society given by Melucci can be disputed by the plurality of meanings of society that can be created by a social movement. Two different bases for knowledge of society underlie Melucci's ambiguity, one being that of the intellectual and the other that of the social movement. The tension

between these bases can be explored by examining the two sources of this ambiguity.

Melucci's allegiance to a unitary or total conceptualisation of society has already been assumed while outlining his theory of complex society, but he also makes this allegiance explicit. For example, he argues that:

"market-based analyses, such as resource mobilization theory, dispense with conceptions of structural boundaries and macro-power relations and reduce everything- illegitimately- to calculation, bargaining and exchange. I therefore accept as a strong working hypothesis the Marxian point that we live within a system that has a definite logic and definite limits" [Melucci, 1989, 186]

Despite this allegiance to an objective view of society, there are pressures from within social movements that pull apart the notion of an independent social structure in which movements operate.

Melucci argues that the unity of a new social movement is created through a collective identity that is negotiated by actors across a multi-polar action system. This means that unity is created by actors negotiating common cognitive frameworks, associational relationships and affective connections between and within the three dimensions of the goals, means and environments of a collective action system. Melucci therefore argues that part of the means of creating unity in a movement includes actors negotiating a common cognitive framework

concerning both the environment in which a movement exists and the relations between this environment and the goals and means of a movement.

Melucci's view effectively means that while constructing their collective identity social movements will define the social structure in which they operate. This interpretation of Melucci is supported by his example of the women's movement, where he wrote of women identifying a male-dominated world in terms of political equality or female difference and when he refers to the ecological movement 'revealing' a systemic social problem and consequently changing cultural and social reality. [Melucci, 1989, 93-99]

The paradox is that Melucci's social movements must develop their own understanding of their environments but he simultaneously claims that these environments are made up of complex society whose nature holds across all social movements. These two claims would not be contradictory if all social movements developed Melucci's view of society, but how could this occur and how could it be guaranteed? First, Melucci explicitly rejects the external imposition on movements of a theory of society, when he rejects Leninism. [Melucci, 1989, 32, 208, 219 & 224] Second, if knowledge of society were considered an objective structure outside of movements, then Melucci's theory would collapse back into the dualism he has

already rejected, as new social movements could be objectively identified by their position in society. In addition, if all new social movement's developed the same theory of the environment in which they operated, then, on this issue, all new social movements would effectively be the one movement, because they would all have negotiated a common identity around transgression. For these reasons it is likely that different social movements will develop different theories of society, in contradiction of Melucci's claim that social movements exist in the one society that has a definite logic and limits.

Melucci does not resolve a contradiction in his work between social movements developing their own cognitive frameworks concerning the society they exist in and the objective definition of a society in which movements operate, whether they know it or not. Further, this contradiction destabilises some of Melucci's basic theoretical points. The most obvious of these are, first, the construction of collective identity and, second, the nature of 'transgression' because both of these points become confused between a movement's definition and the objective definition of society. The first is confused because it is unclear whether a movement creates its identity by constructing its own cognitive frameworks concerning its environment or whether there is an objective view of this environment. The second is

confused because the nature of the system that is transgressed is unclear. Melucci's account of how social movements are unified and an essential part of his analytic definition of social movements are both disrupted by the ambiguity between his theory of society and his theory of the formation of unity in social movements.

In summary, Melucci argued that movements were not unified actors operating according to some form of a 'deep mind' and, instead, could be conceived as having a multiple and diverse nature. Melucci then had to account for the unity that underlies such diversity. However, his account of that unity became caught up in a contradiction between the belief in a society that has a definite logic and limits and a belief in the process of unity as being negotiated within movements. Melucci's account of the unity of pluralistic social movements is threatened by this ambiguity, although his overall conception of social movements as collective action systems is not.

Consequently, in order to develop an adequate view of emancipatory collectives based on Melucci's theory his work must now be supplemented by a new definition of the process of unification of new social movements.

Before giving a definition of this process it should also be noted that Melucci's specific tripartite definition of social movements need not be adopted. Instead, it is the

overall approach that he has developed, where social movements are viewed as collective action systems which are beyond the dualism of an objective position in society or the subjective beliefs of actors in movements, which will be supplemented. Consequently, Melucci's more specific theoretical tools, such as the definition of a social movement through solidarity, conflict and transgression, need not be adopted but can become possible tools which may or may not be relevant to particular analyses of emancipatory collectives. In the same way the work of Touraine, resource mobilisation theory and others, is neither rejected, unless of course it contradicts Melucci's general orientation, nor accepted but can be held as part of a theoretical armoury which can be used to analyse any particular social movement but which is not relevant to the general orientation that is here being developed. [Diani, 1992]

Following Melucci emancipatory collectives will be theorised as socially constructed collective action systems which have no single, formal or hierarchical organisation which governs them but which, instead, consist of highly diverse agglomerations of formal and informal networks. Rather than a specification of a unique organisational form, the objective social position of members of a movement or the characteristic beliefs of members, the ontology of emancipatory collectives will view movements as internally multiple collections of

individuals, actions and organisations. To complete such a pluralistic understanding of emancipatory collectives the process of a collective becoming unified as a collective must now be clarified.

The Boundaries For a General Definition of Oppression and Emancipation.

By definition the unity of an emancipatory social movement can be sought in its project of emancipation and/or its experience of oppression. This point merely underlines the fact that what is at stake in the ontology of emancipatory collectives is not a general theory of social movements but an understanding of a liberatory politics that transcends the difference/value debate. Accordingly, as a sub-section within the general perspective of social movement theory, emancipatory collectives are simply those social movements that coalesce their various elements around an injustice which they seek to destroy or a form of liberation that they wish to enact. To achieve this theory a definition of emancipation and oppression is now needed.

Liberation, freedom and the end of inequality or exploitation have all been aims of emancipatory movements. These words all indicate either the better life to come or the bad life to be left behind. To create a definition of oppression and emancipation these different words now need to be unified, however such a

unification is not simple for the words carry different meanings. For example, inequality may indicate that two groups of people have disproportionate legal rights but exploitation may indicate that one group steals the products of another group's labour.

In addition to this difficulty, it is assumed within the ontology of emancipatory collectives that there are many different collectives and this means there must also be many different forms of oppression and emancipation, because if emancipatory collectives are united around their oppression then there must be different oppressions or there would, in fact, only be one emancipatory collective. Within an ontology that assumes there are multiple forms of emancipation the question to be asked, then, is what can be said in general about emancipation and oppression while simultaneously recognising that each collective's form of oppression will be specific to it and so cannot be pre-determined by the general definition.

Any general notion of emancipation or oppression must now be rethought, not as a governing idea which subordinates all collectives to one will, but as a common thread across emancipatory collectives. Accordingly, the general definition of oppression can be conceived as a marker which indicates whether a set of collective action systems is emancipatory or not but which does not itself

determine the nature of a particular oppression or emancipation. The first characteristic of a general definition of emancipation is therefore that it is an abstraction, in that it can be used to mark collectives as emancipatory but is itself no more substantial than this ability to mark. The general definition is an intellectual guide which leaves actual political struggle to the particular movements which can be identified as emancipatory by that general definition.⁶

The second characteristic of a general definition of oppression has already been stated. It is that this definition must play the role of a unifying factor around which emancipatory collectives coalesce. If the definition of emancipatory collectives is that they are collective action systems that are unified around a project of emancipation or an experience of oppression, then the general definition of oppression must be compatible with this aim. Certain further characteristics that the general definition must not have, in order to ensure that the difference/value debate is not restarted, can also be outlined.

Most obviously, essentialist or naturalist definitions must not be used as these can anchor a value and so

6 For further discussion of this split between a general definition and particular manifestations of oppression see Chapter 10, Section 'Transcendence Between Emancipatory Collectives'.

restart the difference/value debate. Instead of natural or asocial 'essences' that can be accorded to any group of oppressed people, emancipation must here concern a relationship of oppression through which the oppressor and oppressed are defined.

The relationship of oppression also needs to grasp where both resistance to oppression and the desire to oppress is based, because if the oppressed and oppressors are formed through the relationship of oppression it is possible for the definition to leave no basis for resistance to oppression. For example, a problem for Michel Foucault's claim that people's subjectivity is formed by power is that it is unclear what basis people will ever have to decide that their subjectivity, and consequently power, is wrong and so should be changed. If people are created by power, how can they decide that power is wrong ? [Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, 146-147 & 206-207; Fraser, 1989, 171-175] Accordingly, both the 'will-to-resist' of the oppressed and the 'will-to-dominate' of the oppressors must have a basis in the general definition of oppression.

If the first part of the general conception of emancipation states that it is abstract and the second that it is a definition of what unifies an emancipatory collective, then the third states that it is a non-essentialist relationship between an oppressing

collective and an oppressed collective, which offers a basis for the will-to-dominate and the will-to-resist of the respective collectives. It is in their inter-relationship that oppressor, oppressed and oppression gain their meaning. Three alternatives which appear to satisfy these boundaries will now be examined. They are exploitation, alienation and exploitation combined with alienation. The consequent generalisation of these examples will then complete a general definition of emancipation and oppression.

Oppression as Exploitation.

Exploitation is a generalisation of capitalist exploitation as defined by Marx. Marx argued that exploitation exists when the capitalist steals the products of workers' labour in the form of surplus value, as noted in chapter three. Generalised from Marxism, exploitation can be defined as a relationship in which one collective extracts or steals 'something' from at least one other collective and in doing so enriches itself while simultaneously impoverishing the robbed. Exploiters and exploited would be in a relationship whereby the exploiter directly and disproportionately benefits from the exploited by systematically stealing an object from them.

As this is a general definition the nature of the 'something' that is stolen should be understood in the broadest possible way. Both material, such as money or labour, and immaterial, such as dignity or freedom, objects can be included as long as they can be transferred between two collectives and can enrich one while simultaneously impoverishing the other. The definition of the object which is stolen is therefore that it is something of value for at least two different collectives.

Resistance has an immediate basis in the relationship between the exploited and the stolen object. For instance, the appropriation for free by capitalists of products made by workers provides a basis for resistance in the workers' relationship to the production process. The will to exploit can also be founded in the exploiters relationship to the object that is stolen as, by definition, systematically stealing that object will enrich members of a collective.

Emancipation, if it were defined through general exploitation, would be the right of a collective to utilise all valuable objects that it possesses or produces and oppression would be the theft of some or all of these objects.

Oppression as Alienation.

Theories of alienation can be found in several authors and here brief examples will be given from the work of Alain Touraine and Simone de Beauvoir. The two examples share an abstract form which defines alienation as the ability of one collective to benefit by having its interests and beliefs defined as the interests and beliefs of another collective which has different interests and beliefs.

Touraine argues that alienation exists when a person's relationship to society and culture is accorded to him or her in order to maintain the ruling class's dominance. He notes at least three mechanisms of this domination. The first is social integration in which a person is pressured into participating in society. He notes that this occurs not just in the work-place but also in consumption and education. The second is cultural manipulation in which a person's needs and attitudes are controlled. The last is political aggressiveness in which the great 'politico-economic organisations' seek increasing political control over society. These mechanisms alienate people from their own interests by forcing them to relate to society according to the interests of the ruling class. [Touraine, 1969, 6-11; Touraine, 1977, 167-169 & 326-328]

De Beauvoir defines the subjection of women to men as the definition by men of themselves as the Subject and women as the inessential Other. She argues that, in general, a Subject can only posit itself through an opposition with another Subject in which the original Subject asserts both itself as the essential and makes the Other inessential. In particular, she argues that men have made themselves the Subject and women the Other. De Beauvoir also points out that, unlike other subjections, such as that between black and white, women cannot dream of eliminating men as this would ultimately eliminate women as well. The basic trait of woman is therefore that "she is the Other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another." [de Beauvoir, 1949, 21 & Introduction]

De Beauvoir finds this state of woman repugnant because she defines human freedom as the ability to continually reach out through new projects into an indefinitely open future. She writes that:

"Every individual concerned to justify his existence feels that his existence involves an undefined need to transcend himself, to engage in freely chosen projects." [de Beauvoir, 1949, 29]

Women cannot achieve this transcendence because men confer legitimacy only on male projects and so define female projects as inessential. Women are alienated because only male projects have legitimacy and so women

are forced to undertake these projects rather than defining their own.

The common form between Touraine and de Beauvoir is that alienation occurs when one collective benefits by ensuring that its interests are adopted by a collective which has different interests. In alienation the will-to-resist has a basis in a collective's attempts to define and achieve its own interests, while the will-to-dominate is based on the benefits that accrue from imposing a collective's interests on a different collective. Emancipation, if it were defined through general alienation, would be the right of a collective to be represented by its own interests and oppression would be the representation of a collective by another collective's interests.

Oppression as Exploitation and Alienation.

Alienation and exploitation can also be combined to offer a definition of oppression. Marxism provides an example of this when alienation, in the form of commodity fetishism, is used to explain why workers do not understand and resist their exploitation, which is understood as the theft of their labour. Workers believe they are being paid 'a fair days wage for a fair days work' when in fact the employer is not paying them the full price of the value that they produce. Having

accepted the employer's definition of the worth of their labour workers are thus misdirected from their real exploitation. In this case the oppressor manages to have the oppressed adopt its interests in order to prevent the oppressed understanding their exploitation. Another example would be de Beauvoir's feminism, where the alienation of woman as Other is supported and sustained by exploitation through the theft of domestic labour. [de Beauvoir, 1949]

In these two examples the questions 'why does oppression occur' and 'how does oppression occur' are answered by utilising a combination of exploitation and alienation. Marxism uses exploitation as the why, through the extraction of surplus value, and fetishism as the how, in the workers' belief that they are being fairly paid for the value they produce. In de Beauvoir the why is alienation, women's definition as Other, and the how is exploitation, men's theft of labour from women. Using Marx and de Beauvoir as models it can be hypothesised that emancipation and oppression can be defined by distributing alienation and exploitation across two axes, one which determines why oppression occurs and the other how it occurs.

Emancipation in this sense would be a specific combination of alienation and exploitation, while

oppression would be the freedom from any such combination.

The General Definition of Oppression and Emancipation.

The three examples just given all satisfy the three conditions already set out for a general definition of emancipation and oppression and there are no obvious grounds within the ontology of emancipatory collectives to justify a choice between them. In addition, because they are all important ways of conceptualising oppression, any definition that did not include exploitation, in either the general or Marxist sense, or alienation can most likely be considered inadequate. This raises another possibility for the general definition of oppression, because the alternative to choosing between the three examples is to include all three within the definition of oppression as different forms of oppression. To do this the general definition of emancipation would have to be posed at a level of abstraction above that found in exploitation or alienation. A body of work which addresses oppression at such a level of generality is the theory of social closure or exclusion developed by Frank Parkin and Raymond Murphy. An examination of this work will help to identify the appropriate level of abstraction for the general definition of emancipation and oppression.

Parkin begins by criticising Marxism for not explaining or encompassing social divisions other than class. Parkin argues that when race, religion or sexual divisions run counter to class divisions Marxism cannot account for these divisions. Further, he claims that these divisions have become central to understanding collective actions and so cannot be ignored. [Parkin, 1979, 4-9, 36-37 & 46-47; Murphy, 1988, 7-8] However, this does not mean that Parkin and Murphy completely reject Marxism. This may seem an odd comment as Parkin launches a sustained attack on Marxism but it is also clear that various Marxist insights, such as the centrality of property relations in capitalism, are retained by both himself and Murphy.

[Murphy, 1988, 21-32]

Parkin and Murphy are thus close to the concerns of the ontology of emancipatory collectives because they recognise both the legitimacy of many different forms of politics which are not based on class and the consequent need to generalise the nature of exploitation from the extraction of surplus value. Parkin creates this generalisation by expanding Max Weber's comments on social closure. He writes:

"By social closure Weber means the process by which social collectivities seek to maximise rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles. This entails the singling out of certain social or physical attributes as the justificatory basis of exclusion. Weber suggests that virtually any group attribute- race, language, social origin, religion- may be

seized upon provided it can be used for 'the monopolisation of specific, usually economic opportunities'...The distinguishing feature of exclusionary closure is the attempt by one group to secure for itself a privileged position at the expense of some other group through a process of subordination." [Parkin, 1979, 44-45]

Parkin defines exploitation as any form of exclusion or social closure and he calls the reverse of exclusion, that is the excluded's attempts to gain access to whatever is being monopolised, usurpation. [Parkin, 1979, 71 & 74-86; Murphy, 1988, 8-12 & 53-54] In addition, Parkin argues that a group that is excluded can seek to exclude another group and calls this dual closure. For example, a trade union, that represents labourers who are excluded from property, may seek to exclude women from labouring work. [Parkin, 1979, 89-93; Murphy, 1988, 53]

A general definition of oppression, using Parkin's theory of exclusion, would make it the restriction of access to any resource or opportunity and, correspondingly, emancipation would be free access to all resources and opportunities. In this way the theory of social closure seems to provide the basis for a definition of oppression that is more general than either exploitation or alienation. As Parkin also argues that social closures concern collective actions it might be hypothesised that the theory of social closure is, in fact, the general definition of oppression that is needed by the ontology of emancipatory collectives. [Parkin, 1979, 113] However, this is not so.

Exclusion is only a partially adequate basis for oppression because it fails to grasp that oppression can also involve inclusion. This objection is similar to Foucault's rejection of the repression hypothesis concerning the control of sexuality. Foucault argues that sexuality is not just repressed but is also produced. For Foucault, if power tries to control sexuality it does not just try to prevent sexuality overflowing restrictive boundaries, but also creates forms of sexuality which reinforce and promote power. [Foucault, 1976, 15-49] Exclusion and monopolisation are somewhat like repression in that they are based on the prevention of access to some collective actions and do not address the possibility that exploitation can be created or maintained by promoting some collective actions.

For example, women have been included in the workforce in the U.K. in the First and Second World Wars but then excluded when the war ended. This might seem a clear example of closure theory as women were excluded from job opportunities they had access to during war-time, but the process of women moving out of the workforce included the promotion of motherhood as women's desired role in life. Women were not simply excluded from the workforce but were simultaneously included in a different social position which in turn promoted their exclusion. [Phillips, 1987, 58-61] Similarly, Foucault and others have traced the way that certain personal disciplines,

such as punctuality and reliability, had to be taken up by workers on a mass scale in order for large-scale industry to operate. Foucault shows that it was not simply a matter of excluding workers from ownership of the means of production but also of managing their subjectivity into roles which would support industry. [Foucault, 1975b] In both these cases it would be foolish to suggest that exclusion from opportunities and resources was not operating, but it would also be narrow to suggest that exclusion was all that was occurring.

The introduction of Foucault also raises an important underlying point which can be brought out by interpreting his work as the opposite of exclusion theory. Throughout his work Foucault examines how people's subjectivity, in for example their sexuality or their work habits, is managed and developed by systems of power that try to create subjects which support a certain society or power relation. For example, he notes that sexuality did not exist as a term before the nineteenth century and that his history of sexuality would therefore show:

"how an 'experience' came to be constituted in Western societies, an experience that caused individuals to recognise themselves as subjects of a 'sexuality', which was accessible to very diverse fields of knowledge and linked to systems of rules and constraints." [Foucault, 1984a, 4: Foucault, 1981]

In general, Foucault can be characterised as arguing that people are produced as subjects by certain relations of

power which constitute their nature, for example their needs or desires, in certain ways in order to continue these power relations. His work can thus be interpreted as the antithesis of closure theory because he does not deal with the exclusion of people from certain social opportunities but with the way people are produced so that they will want inclusion within only some social opportunities. As Barry Barnes has said if closure theory concerns how 'people are in society', then Foucault's work concerns how 'society is in people'.

When these two different visions are pushed into a direct opposition, closure theory can be interpreted as concerning the way people can be oppressed by means external to them, while Foucault addresses internal oppression.⁷ Accordingly, the general definition of oppression can be clarified by asking where it stands on this divide. Does the definition of oppression conceive it as being imposed on people or can oppression enter into the subjectivities of individuals ?

One of the innovations of post-sixties anti-oppression movements, particularly perhaps the feminist movement, was to emphasise that the 'personal is political'. That is, how individuals think and act in relation to each

7 Pushing Foucault and exclusion theory into this direct opposition does stereotype both theories and, though this is useful in the present context, these stereotypes should not be taken for complete representations of their work.

other is infused with politics and so oppression is no longer simply 'out there' in objective social structures but is also 'inside people's heads'. This would indicate support for Foucault's vision. However, this concern with internal oppression has not necessarily led to a rejection of external oppressions, rather they it has joined external oppression. Many on the left have affirmed both Foucault and exclusion theory's visions of society by arguing that the interrelations between oppressions that are external and internal to individuals both need to be examined. This is combination is also probably a more accurate reflection of Foucault's own views. [Phillips, 1987, 111]

The ontology of emancipatory collectives can follow the claim that oppression is both within and without an individual's subjectivity, thereby avoiding a choice between the different forms of oppression articulated by Foucault and exclusion theory. The definition of oppression that will be proposed herein will accordingly remain agnostic on the choice between oppression within and without people and so will hold open both possibilities. In this way the insight that the personal is political can be retained along with the belief that oppression can result from social structures.

To achieve this agnosticism the first condition of the general definition of oppression can be recalled. It

states that oppression is an abstraction which is only ever realised in particular instances. On the basis of this condition the general definition of oppression can consistently argue that both or either Foucault's and exclusion theory's visions of oppression may be realised in particular, material instances of oppression, without that definition ever making an abstract choice in favour of one or the other. Specific analyses which utilise the definition of oppression will thus need to consider both these types of oppression. Foucault's and exclusion theory's vision thus join detailed social movement theories and exploitation and alienation in the theoretical armoury that the ontology of emancipatory collectives can employ to analyse any specific oppression or emancipation, but have no general significance.

To complete the identification of general definition of emancipation and oppression the third of the three conditions for that definition that have already been delineated should now be recalled. It states that oppression is a non-essentialist collective relationship through which the parties to it are formed and in which both the will-to-dominate and the will-to-resist are based. Exploitation, alienation and exclusion all agree with this condition because they all address an oppressive relationship between collectives and try to specify what occurs in that relationship. Exploitation is centred around a notion of theft, alienation exists when

one group's interests are taken by other groups for their own interests and exclusion focuses on access to resources. What all three share is the conception of a relationship in which at least one collective enriches itself by simultaneously impoverishing at least one other collective. Where exploitation, alienation and exclusion diverge is when they specify the mechanism of enrichment and impoverishment as either theft, one collective's interests standing for several collectives' interests or one collective monopolising opportunities.

To achieve a level of generality which encompasses alienation, exploitation and exclusion the definition of oppression needs to be generalised from theft, the misapprehension of self-interest or the monopolisation of resources. The definition should therefore leave the mechanism of oppression untheorised beyond the claim that oppression exists when one collective benefits because another collective is simultaneously deprived. A mechanism of oppression exists when whatever enriches one collective simultaneously impoverishes another collective

In accordance with the first condition of the definition of oppression more specific conceptions of mechanism of oppression can only be expected from within analyses of actually existing emancipatory collectives. For example, Marxism can specify the oppression of workers in industrial capitalism as the theft of labour and de

Beauvoir can specify the oppression of women as that men define them as the inessential Other, but their definitions only hold in relation to the particular forms of oppression which Marx and de Beauvoir address, while at the general level no presumption toward either exploitation or alienation is made.

The general definition of emancipation would now consist of the three boundaries or conditions that have already been outlined, with the third altered to include what is common to exploitation, alienation and exclusion. The third condition would then read, that emancipation and oppression are created by a relationship between two or more collectives in which at least one collective enriches itself or is enriched by a mechanism which simultaneously impoverishes at least one other collective.

The will-to-resist and the will-to-dominate of the respective collectives can also be derived from this definition, as enrichment is the incentive to oppress and impoverishment the pain to be resisted. For example, the will to resist patriarchy can be located by de Beauvoir in women's fight to be considered a Subject with projects of its own and women's resistance will consist of striving to throw off this status of Other, by rejecting male projects and defining female ones. Similarly, the will of men to continue oppressing women can be located

in their need to continue to define themselves as Subjects through the exclusion of woman as the Other.

In the definition of oppression being proposed the nature of the mechanism that enriches one collective, while impoverishing another can only be known in particular instances of oppression. No candidate should therefore be *a priori* excluded. This means that all possible objects, such as time, money, labour or dignity, and mechanisms, such as theft or terrorism, form possibilities which may or may not be able to be located in actually existing collectives. Unfortunately, 'enrich' and 'impoverish' imply pre-existing understandings of these words and, in particular, imply monetary imbalances, but no such implication is intended and, in the ontology of emancipatory collectives, enrich and impoverish should be interpreted in the widest possible manner.

In summary, the general definition of oppression is three part. First, it conceives oppression at an abstract level while also noting that manifestations of oppression only ever exist in particular material situations. Second, it claims that oppression is the unity around which particular movements coalesce their collective action systems. Third, it argues that oppression is a non-essentialist relationship in which at least one collective enriches itself or is enriched by a mechanism

that simultaneously impoverishes at least one other collective.

Pulling Themselves Up By Their Bootstraps.

A second supplement to Melucci's theory of social movements as collective action systems now needs to be considered because, though the definition of oppression makes clear the source of an emancipatory collective's unity, the process of constructing this unity has not been analysed. The second supplement, which allows the full definition of emancipatory collectives, is an explanation of the process by which collective action systems create their unity.

Put simply, unity is articulated by emancipatory collectives through self-definition. Self-definition is demanded because within the ontology of emancipatory collectives there is no authoritative place from which a movement can be defined and unified, other than from within that movement. This is for two reasons.

First, to define a collective or movement from outside of itself would resurrect the difference/value debate by creating some position of authority outside of movements, thereby providing the basis for the assertion of an authoritative value. For example, if oppression were defined as the restriction of anyone's liberty and

liberty were therefore posited as an absolute value which was valid across all emancipatory collectives, then difference could reassert itself by questioning the nature of liberty for particular collectives. Women's liberty may not be the same as workers' or gays' and lesbians' and the difference/value debate could be reinitiated through arguments over differences to the unified value 'liberty'.

Second, if emancipatory collectives define themselves by criteria external to themselves then actors from outside of a collective may define oppression for members of such a collective. This means that actors who are not oppressed, in a particular sense, may attempt to define oppression on behalf of the oppressed. Such an occurrence can be rejected because, apart from its paternalistic overtones, the left's collective memory claims that if some group defines the nature of an oppression that they do not actually suffer, then this will most likely continue oppression by creating a definition that does not correspond to the oppressed's experience of oppression. For example, if Marxists define the unity of black liberation struggles they will do this by Marxist criteria and are therefore likely to miss or downgrade important aspects of black struggles, such as those Gilroy has noted in the connection between the actions of black workers and the experiences of young black people. [Gilroy, 1987, 18-20]

In order to ensure that a collective develops a clear sense of its oppression, it must create that sense itself. Anne Phillips expresses the power of self-definition when she notes that her commitment to feminism was related to her self whereas her commitment to socialism was more abstract.

"And for those who had been dogged by the ambiguities in being both middle class and socialist, it was part of the appeal of women's politics that it seemed to sweep these away. Speaking for myself, I can remember the extraordinary relief of discovering that I too was oppressed, that no longer the 'maid in the attic of someone else's movement' I was now a full fledged proprietor in my own right. It sounds absurd- who wants to be oppressed ?- but the power of feminist politics was that it arose from personal experience and compared with the more theoretical, perhaps altruistic, basis on which I adhered to a socialist politics, this seemed much more real. The women's movement was about us not *them*" [Phillips, 1987, 111]

Self-definition is necessary, however it also appears to contradict Melucci's approach. Melucci defines social movements beyond the values and beliefs of the actors in them but self-definition appears to make such beliefs central again by relying on the definitions of oppression made by actors in a movement. However, examination of the process of self-definition shows that it does not necessarily result in a unity which is at the mercy of the changing beliefs of any individual, even if it is formed through the self-definitions of individuals. Barry Barnes' account of social life as bootstrapped induction demonstrates how a process of individuals making self-

validating inferences can constitute stable forms of social organisation. [Barnes, 1983]

Barnes notes that the objectivity created by a system of self-definitions is the same objectivity as that which underlies a bank. He argues that a bank is based on a system of designations by individuals that regard the bank as 'sound' and this can be seen most clearly when there is a run on a bank created by people withdrawing their designation of the bank as sound and so also withdrawing their money. Once such a run is started the system of definitions as sound which supported the bank can quickly become unravelled leading to the bank's collapse. The creation of a bank can also be seen to be based on people's self-definitions because as people begin to deposit their money, and so designate the bank as sound, the system grows thereby confirming the soundness of the bank and building it until the bank's soundness has been objectively established. [Barnes, 1983, 536-538]

In general, Barnes argues that a system of many people making a certain designation may be tautological when taken as an individual act, for example an act is oppressive because someone says it is oppressive or a bank is sound because it is believed to be sound, but it may be non-subjective when that individual act is part of a whole system of similar designations. Each individual

designation feeds back into a system of self-definitions, further establishing it and so 'bootstrapping' the system into existence. Barnes notes that as the number of designations in a system increases so the individual contribution of any one individual decreases.

Consequently, he argues that individuals' "knowledge increasingly approximates to knowledge of what *other* people are doing" or, put another way, "collectivity creates its reference". [Barnes, 1983, 533 & 536]

From the individuals' viewpoint the referent created by a collective achieves greater and greater objectivity as the collective grows. That is, as a system of self-definitions grows larger the ability of any individual designation to alter the overall system is progressively 'damped' by the weight of other designations. This means that when a large system is in place it will not be susceptible to one designation instituting fundamental change. In this sense the overall system achieves objectivity. The process of bootstrapped self-definition thus shows how an emancipatory collective can begin from individual self-definitions as oppressed and grow into an objectively existing structure. However, the system is also never free from change instituted by self-designations because each designation continues to feedback into the overall system and so still has an effect. It is simply that the larger the system the more

damped any individual's effect will be. [Barnes, 1983, 536]

An example of bootstrapping can be found in feminism's use of consciousness raising groups. In consciousness raising small groups of women meet to discuss the relationship between their personal experiences and women's oppression in general and so the groups provide a forum in which women are able to self-designate themselves as feminists and become part of an overall movement. However, women who came into these groups in the eighties, rather than the sixties, had to place themselves in the more developed structure of history, organisation and texts which had grown up around women's liberation. These women thus made self-designations in a far more developed structure than earlier feminists. This does not mean that feminism cannot be altered but that alterations in the eighties occurred in a more objective framework than existed in the sixties. [Rowbotham, 1990, 3-4; Evans, 1980] For example, when black women and lesbians claimed they were not included by feminism's definition of oppression, they did so against feminism's already established understandings of women's place in the family or women's sexual exploitation. Black women and lesbians self-defined themselves as being outside the established structures of feminism and because many women then changed their definition of the oppression of women the structures of feminism then changed.

Another example of the development of the feminist framework can be found when Lynne Segal recounts how, at the nineteen seventy-five Socialist-Feminist conference in London, women from some Trotskyist groups organised the conference around a series of large plenaries with speakers. Segal claims that this left little space for smaller working groups to discuss a wide range of issues and was aimed at trying to introduce a central committee which would direct the women's movement solely into a campaign for abortion on demand. This attempt to hijack the conference and the movement led to that conference's collapse and a failure to hold any similar conferences for three years. It also left an enduring suspicion of the manipulatory techniques of Trotskyist groups, as can be seen in the highly critical analysis of Leninism and Trotskyism contained in the book Beyond the Fragments.

[Rowbotham et.al., 1979] Any woman entering the socialist-feminist movement in the years following these events who also wanted to create links with Trotskyism would thus be confronted by the overall system of socialist-feminism which included many designations claiming that such links are problematic if not dangerous. [Segal, 1987, 43-55: Phillips, 1987, 134-143: Rowbotham et.al., 1979: Rowbotham, 1990]

It should also be noted that a range of elements can be utilised in the bootstrapping process. Texts, events, organisational forms and particular charismatic

individuals can all influence the self-designations that make up a bootstrapped system. Some of these may also gain a disproportionate influence over a system. For example, the texts of Marx have more power over self-definitions of socialism than most other relevant texts or individuals. Nevertheless, in the final analysis the process of bootstrapping can only coalesce collective actions into an emancipatory collective if enough people make enough self-definitions.

In summary, self-definition, as a system of bootstrapped induction, demonstrates how a collective may begin with individuals simply defining themselves as oppressed and then grow into a social movement whose understandings and definitions form a stable and non-subjective base for actions and beliefs. The sense of oppression and emancipation unifying an emancipatory collective will accordingly not be subject to the whims of any individual, while it will also both have been derived from self-definitions made by individuals and will ultimately be subject to those definitions.

Emancipatory Collectives.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives consists of social movements each of which addresses a particular project of emancipation or experience of oppression. The ontology is thus made up of many different forms of

liberation, each of which concerns a relationship of oppression between at least two collectives.

Oppression within the ontology of emancipatory collectives is defined as a relationship in which at least two sets of collective action systems are constituted in opposition to each other because one collective enriches itself or is enriched in a way that simultaneously, and because it enriches that collective, impoverishes another collective. Neither collective needs to be considered a unified body based on either a particular ideology, a distinctive organisation or the objective social position of its members. Instead, these collectives can be understood as sets of collective action systems which may include a pluralistic range of elements, from formal organisations to texts, individuals and informal networks. Emancipatory collectives are unified around their emancipatory project or their oppressive experience and are diversified through the wide range of elements that make up their collective action systems.

The process of self-definition which constitutes a movement's unity consists of self-designations as oppressed or emancipatory made by actors which loop back into a system made out of these designations. As any such system grows it becomes an increasingly objective structure, though it is never complete nor fully stable

because designations continue to be made. However, the larger a system becomes the more strongly grounded it becomes, so that it can attain a bank-like objectivity. In this way, collective action systems can pull themselves up by their own bootstrapped self-definitions and form emancipatory collectives which posit objectively existing oppressions.

The next major question will be, how do these emancipatory collectives relate to each other ? The individual characteristics of collectives have been outlined but what implications do these characteristics have for interactions or communications between emancipatory movements ? These question will be taken up in the next chapter.

The theory so far developed concerns emancipatory collectives that fight the oppressions that their members designate and adjust their understandings of oppression as their members change their definitions of oppression. Emancipatory collectives seek to change oppression in society from the perspective of those who are impoverished in society.

Chapter Nine: The Space of Emancipatory Politics.

Misunderstanding and Assimilation.

The relations that develop between emancipatory collectives create the general 'space' of emancipatory politics and a theory of that space can be developed from the nature of those collectives. As this theory concerns the same level of generality as the definition of oppression it will not specify exactly what relations emancipatory collectives have with each other, but will instead articulate the framework within which inter-collective relations develop. This framework consists of two axes called misunderstanding and assimilation.

Emancipatory collectives base their actions and discourses in different self-definitions of oppression and they hold their self-definitions with passion because they are a collectives' definition of what is wrong and must be changed in society. Accordingly, what can be known of one collective by another collective will be coloured or structured by the discourses and actions of the 'knowing' collective. The understanding developed by an emancipatory collective of a different oppression, that is the relations that are developed when elements of different movement's collective actions systems come into contact, will thus be influenced by a collective's understanding of its own oppression. Collectives will

therefore continually be influenced to misunderstand each other.

For example, Segal recounts how socialist-feminists attending the fourth British socialist-feminist conference, held in nineteen seventy-four, were asked to consider the question "Do we see the women's movement as some kind of vanguard movement or as a petty-bourgeois movement which may be ideologically useful but is essentially marginal to the main political struggle". [Segal, 1987, 50] The organisers who framed the question clearly viewed the women's movement from a Leninist perspective in which socialist-feminism could only be either part of the vanguard party and the revolutionary struggle or part of the peripheral petty-bourgeois struggle. The conference organisers viewed the women's movement from a basis in Marxism and so imposed on feminism categories developed in that struggle. In doing so feminism was misunderstood, as became obvious when women objected and reasserted its diverse nature. [Segal, 1987, 51]

The cross axis to misunderstanding can occur if some collectives come to a total understanding of each other by merging their self-definitions of oppression. Each emancipatory collective bases its own discourses and actions in its self-definition of oppression, accordingly if a collective gives up its own self-definition for that

of another discourse or if several collectives merge their self-definitions then these collectives will have to give up their particular identity for a common identity.

For example, the socialist-feminist conferences described by Segal could have turned out differently. The majority of women might have accepted the characterisation of socialist-feminism that some Trotskyist women proposed and so placed the class struggle first, thereby making feminism subordinate to the Leninist party's fight to institute the dictatorship of the proletariat. If this had occurred, and plainly there were at least some women who agreed with such a view, then socialist-feminism would have effectively become part of the worker's movement. [Weir and Wilson, 1984]

In summary, in the ontology of emancipatory collectives relations between collectives, that is the space of emancipatory politics, can be theorised as a framework with the two axes of misunderstanding and assimilation. Misunderstanding is an influence because collectives are known by other collectives through the preconceptions of those other collective and not through a collective's own preconceptions. Assimilation influences collectives to alter their preconceptions to those of another collective and so, in fact, become part of that collective. The extremes of one movement totally misunderstanding or

completely assimilating another emancipatory movement should not, however, be understood as two alternatives for inter-collective relations, instead they form the two axes of a framework within which various alternatives can be realised. Neither are the two axes mutually exclusive. It can therefore be expected that the pluralistic nature of emancipatory collectives will allow the development of various levels and combinations of misunderstanding and assimilation between collectives.

Misunderstanding.

The misunderstandings emancipatory collectives make of each other should not be interpreted as errors or carelessness, as if scrupulous attention to the discourses of another collective would make them transparent. Neither should they be understood as malicious or wilful, as if one collective decides not to understand another. Instead misunderstandings are a condition of inter-collective relations. Emancipatory collectives exist because their various collective action systems are unified around an experience of oppression and it is from this basis that a movement's collective action systems will be able to view the theories and actions of another emancipatory collective. This basis will then, with no malice or incompetence, structure one collective's understanding of other collectives and so

will ensure that a pull toward misunderstanding is present.

For example, Jenny Bourne notes that the left has had difficulty recognising its own racism. She argues that in the seventies, in Britain, black workers were generally supported by the left only when they participated in recognisably working class activity. Specifically black demands, such as action against police or the education system or building a 'black infrastructure' by organising supplementary schools and community organisations, usually went unrecognised and unsupported by the left. Worse, such demands were sometimes dismissed as reactionary black nationalism. [Bourne, 1983]

"The left had no conception of state racism or of black oppression and was unable to comprehend, let alone applaud, any black 'self-activity' or any black analysis of society which stressed aspects other than those of class exploitation. It viewed these as 'splitist' (at best) or as racism in reverse (at worst)." [Bourne, 1983, 6]

Bourne argues that the left focused on class struggle and so could not understand black people's struggles against their oppression. Instead the left viewed these activities, first, as a threat to working class unity and, second, as the building of a nationalism that, from the class point of view, was politically dubious. The left's interpretation of society as a class determined society thus led it to misunderstand both the oppression of black people and their struggle for emancipation.

Another example where black liberation has been misunderstood is in relation to feminist theories of the family. In the nineteen seventies feminism argued that the nuclear family was a key source of oppression for women but feminism also failed to take account of the different family structures that exist in black and white communities. For instance, statistics give a different picture of the economic role of black and white women in British families, with white women shouldering far less financial responsibility than black women. In addition, black families have been important sources of support for black liberation struggles and white feminists failed to include these actions in any more positive assessment of the family. White feminists thus misunderstood black families by assuming that black and white families were the same. [Barrett and McIntosh 1982: Barrett and McIntosh, 1985: Nain, 1991, 8-10: Amos and Parma, 1984, 9-11]

In this example inter-collective relations developed as feminists tried to understand the objections black women made about the feminist theory of the family. An instance of this process was the journal Feminist Review offering some black women control of an edition, in which these women discussed the problem of the family. The authors of a prominent feminist analysis of the family, Barrett and McIntosh, subsequently altered their views to try and incorporate the points made by black women, while also

retaining their own perspective. Their attempt at revision led in turn to a series of critical replies from black women. Inter-collective relations were developed in this example but they did so under the influence of misunderstanding. [Amos and Parma, 1984: Barrett and McIntosh, 1985: Ramazanoglu, 1986: Kazi, 1986: Lees, 1986: Mirza, 1986]

An example of reciprocal misunderstanding occurred when feminists held demonstrations against sexual violence in predominantly black areas. The feminist actions reinforced media, police and community stereotypes of the sexual danger posed by black men, but because some of these areas were also 'red light' districts they were prime targets for protests against the sexual exploitation of women. In this case, feminists often did not see the oppression of black people, a point made particularly clear by the occasional call by feminists for better policing in an area where black people already suffered authoritarian styles of policing, but feminists also had valid reasons within their own understanding of oppression for targeting these areas. In this case the misunderstandings were two-way, with white feminists and black activists focusing on different interpretations of the protest areas depending on whether they based their views on feminism or black liberation. [Bhavnani and Coulson, 1986, 82-84: Amos and Parma, 1984, 14: Bourne, 1983, 13]

A more detailed example of inter-collective relations developing under the influence of misunderstanding is Lindsay Murphy and Jonathan Livingstone's article calling for feminism to abandon a male versus female view of the world in favour of a materialism that includes both the determining power of the mode of production and a theory of racism. Murphy and Livingstone claim that feminism grew out of a disillusionment with socialist politics but that, instead of contributing to a reordered socialism, it deviated from materialist beliefs and developed a 'radical feminism'. They outline this radical feminism in seven points which, they claim, are inextricably intertwined and form the "logical conclusion of a feminism not thoroughly socialist". [Livingstone and Murphy, 1985, 61-62]

Livingstone and Murphy's seven point feminism is that: the oppression of women is the most fundamental oppression; women have a primary commonality or sisterhood; patriarchy is independent of capitalism; power is the personal power of men over women; all men are sexist; men and women have an essence; and, separatism of men and women is the goal of feminism. [Livingstone and Murphy, 1985, 62-3] Livingstone and Murphy establish to their own satisfaction that this is the only type of feminism that it is logically necessary to deal with, because this is the nature of feminism that is not thoroughly socialist, and then have little

difficulty in showing that such a female centred view of the world cannot incorporate the insights of the black or socialist movement. Worse, radical feminism is actually a block to liberation.

"Subsuming racism to patriarchy, as radical feminism must do, denies the autonomy of the black struggle. It seduces the struggle away from attacking racism and engages it in frivolous arguments and superfluous activities." [Livingstone and Murphy, 1985, 69]

Livingstone and Murphy end by calling on feminism to reintegrate itself with the one unified but tripartite struggle against capitalism, patriarchy and whitearchy.

Livingstone and Murphy are a particularly strong misinterpretation of feminism with their straw-like version of radical feminism being taken to represent all of the women's movement and their condescending language in which women 'seduce' and are concerned with the 'frivolous' and 'superfluous'. Nonetheless, what is interesting is that Livingstone and Murphy's misinterpretation is based on their own interpretation of materialism. They accuse feminism of severing women from the structural oppression inflicted on them by the economic system in favour of basing oppression in the individual beliefs of men and women. From Livingstone and Murphy's point of view radical feminism failed to understand that all oppression is interrelated and based in the economic system.

According to Livingstone and Murphy, radical feminism is not only a threat to the unified struggle of blacks, women and workers but is itself threatened by the possibility of this unified struggle, as it would undermine feminism's division of the world into male oppressor and female oppressed. [Livingstone and Murphy, 1985, 67] But this either/or confrontation between radical feminism and the unified struggle against oppression is created not so much from feminism's viewpoint but from Livingstone and Murphy's which, because it is committed to one unified struggle based in the mode of production, must see any beliefs contradictory to their own as competitors. What can be learnt from Livingstone and Murphy's attack on the women's movement is thus more about their misunderstandings than it is about feminism.

In summary, inter-collective relations are developed from each collectives' different self-definitions and so collectives will be influenced to misunderstand each other by viewing a different collective through the viewing, and not the viewed, collective's own preconceptions. An important issue, then, is whether inter-collective relations can ever give rise to a genuine understanding between collectives. As already indicated there is a second axis to inter-collective relations and it involves a form of inter-collective understanding called assimilation.

Assimilation.

Assimilation influences collectives toward two or more collectives developing relations through various collective action systems, then beginning to create the same collective actions and, eventually, adopting the same understanding of oppression or emancipation. In theory, the result would be that different collectives would become the one collective because they would have developed the same unifying definition of oppression and emancipation.

For example, an important early demand of the feminist movement was for women to have control of their fertility. This was expressed in one of the seven demands of British feminism that were enunciated in nineteen seventy:

"We want to be free to choose when and how many kids we have, if any". [Phillips, 1987, 110]

This demand became, by the late seventies, centered on a claim for free, safe abortion on demand. However, black women argued that their interests were not met by this demand because for them the issue was not so much the termination of pregnancy, as the right to control their reproduction. This difference stemmed from the experiences of black women which involved sterilisation without consent, the use of the dangerous contraceptive

drug depo-provera without consent and generally easy access to abortion from doctors who appeared to be eager to prevent black children. The Brixton Black Women's Groups felt that "abortion wasn't something we had any problems getting as black women- it was the very reverse for us !" [Quoted in Nain, 1991, 10-11: Amos and Parma, 1984, 12-13: Barrett and McIntosh, 1985, 40-41] Feminists and black women therefore initially had a problem of misunderstanding over abortion rights. However, this particular relationship of misunderstanding lead to a reassessment by black and white women of their positions and the partial assimilation of the two movements.

Organisational assimilation can be seen when the pressure created by the misunderstanding led to a split in the National Abortion Campaign and the formation of two different groups. One group continued the campaign around abortion rights, but the other was a reproductive rights group which included the right to abortion among the other rights women need to control their own bodies. The claims for abortion rights had reflected white women's key demand, but some white women now revised their position and with black women returned a woman's right to control her reproduction to its full interpretation, which reflected both black and white women's demands. Simultaneously, some black women reconsidered their view of abortion and recognised that restrictions on a woman's right to abortion could mean a return to back street

abortion, which might in turn increase the use of depopulation to prevent black women conceiving. Some black women thus saw a need to support abortion rights in order to maintain control of their bodies. In short, black and white women came to posit a common oppression in their lack of control over reproduction and a common part of their emancipation in a woman's right to abortion. [Nain, 1991, 10: Amos and Parma, 1984, 12-13]]

In this common commitment to reproductive rights certain collective actions of both the women's and the black people's movements were merged and it makes sense to speak of these two movements becoming, in part, the one set of collective actions. However, this does not mean the two movements were completely unified. As already noted assimilation is an axis of influence, not a category. In this case some collective actions of the black and feminist movements drew together to become the same actions, which does not mean that all the various collective actions of both movements were completely merged. For example, the misunderstanding between feminism and black liberation over 'reclaim the night' marches in black communities occurred at the same time that common understandings were developing between black and white women over reproductive rights.

In summary, assimilation is an influence that occurs when parts of some emancipatory collectives come to see,

through interactions between the elements of their collective action systems, an identity or unity in at least part of their self-definitions of emancipation or oppression. Assimilations are a form of understanding that can develop between collectives, even though it is an understanding based on the merging of collectives and not on transparent communication between independent collectives. Overall, when emancipatory collectives relate to each other they therefore do so within the two general axes of misunderstanding each other or merging with each other. While the nature of the framework should now be clear more detailed theories of inter-collective relations also have a place in the ontology of emancipatory collectives and the next section will consider this place.

Inter-Collective Relations.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives does not predetermine the details of inter-collective relations, instead it establishes the framework of misunderstanding and assimilation within which these relations occur. The framework consists of two axes of influence but, in practice, the realisation of a pure version of either pole is unlikely. In addition, the two poles are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly, the actual relationships that emancipatory collectives develop will be distributed

across the two axes in positions that cannot be predicted by the framework itself.

The exact form of relations that particular collectives develop can only be determined by empirical analysis of really existing relations. However, theories of inter-collective relations more detailed than the misunderstanding and assimilation framework can be used to analyse particular situations. For example, two theories which might be used to analyse particular instances of inter-collective relations are Melucci's analysis of mobilisations and Alisdair MacIntyre's theory of primary and secondary virtues. Melucci's theory of mobilisation has already been outlined in chapter eight, when it was used to describe how several emancipatory collectives can join together in a short-term campaign over a specific issue and this theory may be applicable to some particular sets of inter-collective relations, though they would also have to be set within the two axes of misunderstanding and assimilation. Similarly, MacIntyre's theory can be used as an understanding of inter-collective relations and it will be useful to briefly demonstrate this.

MacIntyre distinguishes between primary and secondary virtues in this way:

"I call these secondary virtues for this reason, that their existence in a moral scheme of things as

virtues is secondary to, is if you like parasitic upon, the notion of another primary set of virtues which are directly related to the goals which men pursue as the ends of their lives. The secondary virtues do not assist us in identifying which ends we should pursue. The assumption made when they are commended is that men are already pursuing certain ends, and that they have to be told to modify their pursuit of these ends in certain ways. The secondary virtues concern the way in which we should go about our projects; their cultivation will not assist us in discovering upon which project we ought to be engaged." [MacIntyre, 1967, 24]

For MacIntyre primary virtues express the ultimate goals or ends of people's lives, while secondary virtues concern the way that people carry out those ends. He then points out that a common allegiance to secondary virtues can be achieved even if primary virtues are different and so groups of people with different primary goals in life can achieve some form of alliance, without compromising their primary virtues, by creating common secondary virtues. [MacIntyre, 1967, 21-24]

For example, MacIntyre argues that in nineteenth century England workers and employers had divergent primary virtues but were able to create common ground through secondary virtues defined around a concept of 'Englishness'. This Englishness privileged the values of pragmatism, co-operativeness, fairness, tolerance and compromise. Once workers and employers became committed to these values the way was open for some employers to agree with the legalisation of trade unions as a fair or English way of conducting business and for some workers to become more concerned with rates of pay and aiding

industrial competitiveness than with revolutionary claims because this accorded with English pragmatism. Although different primary virtues existed in both groups MacIntyre claims they were able to develop common ground through a common conception of Englishness. [MacIntyre, 1967, 22-24 & 26-27]

MacIntyre's primary and secondary virtues can be viewed as a theory of relations that emancipatory collectives might develop. For example, there is Hilary Wainwright's call, quoted in chapter one, for the renewal of a unified socialist struggle on the basis of a common commitment to the right to 'control one's own life'. [Wainwright, 1979, 5-6]

Wainwright realised that the political interests of such groups as women, black people, trade unionists, gays, youth and national minorities are divergent. She also recognised that these groups' interests may at times be antagonistic to each other. However, she also believed that an overall socialist struggle is necessary for the true liberation of all these groups and so she called on them to unite through a common interest in 'control of their own lives'. [Wainwright, 1979, 5-6] In MacIntyre's terms Wainwright recognised the divergent primary virtues of these groups and then brought forward a secondary virtue aimed at processes rather than ends. Here 'control of one's own life' becomes a means to combat the

oppression of women, black people, trade unionists and gays and lesbians and so is a secondary virtue dependant on these groups' prior understanding of the life they wish to control. In this way Wainwright can be interpreted as suggesting that divergent primary interests, that is different definitions of 'life', can be allied through a common commitment to the secondary virtue of control.

As with Melucci's concept of mobilisation MacIntyre's primary and secondary virtues provide one way of theorising inter-collective relations. However, the ontology of emancipatory collectives does not claim that all collectives are involved in primary and secondary virtues or mobilisations. Instead, it argues that while both a theory of mobilisations and of virtues might be aid understanding of an appropriate instance of inter-collective relations, these theories would still have to take account of the over-riding framework of misunderstanding and assimilation. Mobilisations and primary and secondary virtues can accordingly be placed in the theoretical armoury of the ontology of emancipatory collectives and can be used when and where they are appropriate, even if they have no general significance. In conclusion the effects of the framework of misunderstanding and assimilation on the space of emancipatory politics will be examined.

The Space of Emancipatory Politics.

The space of emancipatory politics is determined by the influence that self-definitions created by emancipatory collectives hold over the development of inter-collective relations. This space cannot consist of a society whose features determine the existence of emancipatory collectives and the ways they inter-relate. The space of emancipatory politics is not a unified social space but is a framework in which many different forms of social space may be developed. However, this does not mean that emancipatory collectives cannot develop inter-relations and examples of communication between emancipatory collectives across different social spaces can be seen when they come into conflict.

For instance, while men are the oppressors of women the majority of workers in the labour movement have often been men. Accordingly, though there may be nothing essential in the oppression of workers that makes the workers' collective sexist, it may in fact be so. For instance, Trade Unions may seek to exclude women from certain forms of work or may be unconcerned with different pay levels between men and women. Here the women's collective may view, from the basis of its own oppression, the workers' collective not as an oppressed group in its own right but as part of the structure of patriarchy that oppresses women. In a sense, two

different societies exist in capitalism and patriarchy, with workers addressing capitalism and women addressing patriarchy but this does not mean that the two collectives are invisible to each other, only that their relations develop from different conceptions of society and so will be affected by misunderstanding and assimilation.

The space of emancipatory politics is neither that of a particular society nor is it completely abstract. White and black women 'saw' different societies through which 'reclaim the night' marches passed, one in which men inflict violence on women and another in which black men are oppressed through racist stereotypes. It makes no sense to say that black and white women existed in a totally abstract space because they both addressed society, but they also did not seem to exist in the same social space. Consequently, neither of the two opposed possibilities of one unified society or a totally abstract space make up the arena of emancipatory politics. Instead, the opposition between the terms society and abstraction is dislocated because each emancipatory collective builds up an objective account of its own oppression and society which will be complementary to other accounts and from these divergent bases elements of collective action systems begin to create inter-collective relations. The analysis of inter-collective relations thus raises issues concerning the

overall conception of society and political vision created by the ontology of emancipatory collectives and these issues will be taken up in the next chapter.

In conclusion, the space of emancipatory politics consists of emancipatory collectives, each of which is unified around a definition of oppression which is itself complementary to other such definitions. Inter-collective relations develop when elements of movements' collective action systems come into contact with each other and these inter-relations then develop under the influence of misunderstanding or assimilation. In the ontology of emancipatory collectives inter-collective relations are constantly developed and re-developed but all such activities are influenced by misunderstandings and assimilations.

Chapter 10: A Vision of Emancipatory Politics.

Left Politics and Emancipatory Politics.

The aim of the left has been a complete reconstruction of society through the elimination of exploitation. This aim was to be achieved by a revolutionary collective constituted through practice. Since the nineteen-sixties maintaining this aim has become progressively more difficult, not because anti-oppression struggles have disappeared but because the overall vision, from which particular struggles gained a larger meaning, has become unclear. The left's collective memory traced these growing problems to the emergence of anti-oppression struggles that could not be encompassed within Marxism. The left found itself confronted with many different anti-oppression movements and so its definition of revolution became splintered.

Some have argued that this overall loss of vision is a step forward. For example, some theorists of difference claim that the spectre of totalitarianism will be forever banished from liberation struggles if the aim of a unified and overarching struggle is rejected. Michel Foucault once offered a seven point guide to a non-fascist life in which the first point was the command "free political action from all unitary and totalising paranoia". [Foucault, 1972, xiii-xiv] At least for

Foucault the end of left unity is positive as it also ends any affinity the left has for totalitarianism. Stalin's moustache is forever shaved off.

However, there are two reason why the fragmentation of the overall vision of left politics can be considered a loss. First, in opposition to Foucault's analysis the rejection of an overall vision of politics can itself open the door to totalitarianism. Second, if there is no positive overall vision it becomes impossible to separate emancipatory collectives from oppressor collectives. The way in which the ontology of emancipatory collectives makes good these losses can now be examined and this will lead to an articulation of the ontology's overall vision and its basic assumptions.

Transcendence Within Emancipatory Collectives.

A theoretical basis for totalitarianism can be created when a political movement develops a framework which does not allow it to transcend its own view because such a framework can mean a movement will take itself for the only existing political viewpoint. An example of such a position is Mary Daly's metaethics of radical feminism. [Daly, 1978: Segal, 1987: Eisenstein, 1984]

Daly is a feminist who exhorts women to be creative and to 'spin' out of the webs that men have made around them.

She argues that women's nature is to be beyond the horrors of the patriarchal world, horrors which she also powerfully documents, and she calls on women to rediscover their essential nature in their ability to create. Men are evil, by their nature, and women inherently good, though they can be misled. For Daly an unpolluted, non-patriarchal world would be based on the revelation of women's purity and then constructed by purified women. Daly creates a feminist totalitarianism which would exclude the polluters, while enlightened women have all power in order to create a free space in which to exercise their naturally given creativity.

[Daly, 1978: Segal, 1987: Eisenstein, 1984]

Daly creates a totalitarianism because, in part, she has no means of transcending her own viewpoint and recognising that there are oppressions other than women's oppression. She has also been criticised for this, for example Audre Lord wrote of Daly's work that "beyond sisterhood is still racism." [Quoted in Segal, 1987, 21] Lord confronted Daly with the difference of black oppression from women's oppression, thereby revealing the limitations of Daly's universalism.

The first reason for having an overall framework for liberatory politics is thus the need for a means by which emancipatory collectives can see beyond themselves while still seeing with their own eyes. The ontology of

multiple emancipations tries to achieve this through a distinction between particular oppressions, which are fought by self-defined collective action systems, and the articulation of an abstract ontology which includes a general definition of oppression. However, this distinction immediately creates a paradox. The general definition of oppression, which is meant to be valid across collectives, is subject to the particular self-definitions made by collectives, as it is these collectives that grasp and fight real oppression. The paradox is that the ontology, or general view, is needed to achieve transcendence across collectives but is itself subject to the reality of struggle in particular collectives. The particular seems to govern the general, but the general is supposed to marshall the particular.

This paradox of the general and the particular can be resolved by noting that the general view concerns abstract categories and the particular view concrete situations. This point can be understood through an analogy with Marx's distinction between general production, as a transhistorical category, and particular forms of production, which exist in historical contexts.

Marx argued that his basic belief, that all individuals exist in societies, meant that all human societies must produce their subsistence and so all societies had some things in common. This 'commonality' was transcendental

because existed in all possible societies. Marx then defined this commonality by claiming that all societies combine human labour, raw materials and technology in order to produce their subsistence. In contrast to this transcendental conception Marx also noted that the actual reality of production existed only in particular societies. In existing societies a specific production system could be analysed but it would be initially identified by the general concept of production. In this way the general concept of production acts as a guide to actually existing production systems. [Sayer, 1979, 77-88]

For example, as argued in chapter two, capitalism's particular production system requires the separation of individual labour power from the organisation of work. This division is not predetermined by the general conception of production, however the importance of investigating the nature of labour in any society is argued for by the general concept. The general view thus provides a guide which enables analysis of particular instances.

In the ontology of emancipatory collectives the distinction between a general definition of oppression and particular manifestations of oppression is analogous to Marx's distinction between general production and existing production systems. The paradox of the general

and the particular in the ontology of emancipatory collectives is accordingly resolved by claiming that each is primary but in relation to a different aspect of emancipation or oppression. The general definition of oppression aids identification of emancipatory collectives, while the particular self-definitions of oppression made by collectives set the grounds for political action and articulate materially existing forms of oppression.

A perspective of wholeness, which offers collectives a means of grasping their own limitations, is thus created by the ontology of emancipatory collectives. This is possible and is not a threat to a collective because the whole perspective is developed in the abstract, in the sense that it is not based in a collective. In chapter eight and nine it was noted that each collective develops its own discourse and so must view the adoption of another's discourse as a threat to its self-definition or as a move to the assimilation of the two collectives. However, this applies only if the discourse outside of the collective's own is itself based in another collective. The general perspective of emancipatory politics is not based in any collective and can simply offer itself up to emancipatory collectives as a tool for understanding and progressing emancipatory politics. In this way emancipatory collectives need not believe they are the only possible form of emancipation while

simultaneously remaining true to their own political vision.

Identifying Oppressor Collectives.

The second loss caused by the fragmentation of the overall vision of the left is the inability to distinguish oppressor from emancipatory social movements. If there is no overall vision of liberation to which movements can refer, or be referred, and which can decide whether collectives meet a criteria of 'liberation' or 'emancipation', then it is impossible to judge movements and their form of liberation. For example, without an overall political vision Lord's criticism of Daly's feminism would have no relevance, as there would be no criteria by which Daly would be wrong to ignore racism. Pushed to its limit, the lack of a general criteria for liberatory politics means that any politics could claim to be liberatory because there would be no standard of liberation.

To make good this loss using the ontology of emancipatory collectives it can be recalled that emancipatory collectives are unified around a self-definition of oppression or emancipation and so the general definition of oppression can be used as a standard in order to mark collectives as emancipatory or not. That definition was proposed in chapter eight and was three part.

The first part of the definition of oppression is that it is an abstraction which is only manifested in particular movements. Any movement which takes its particular form of oppression to be the universal form of oppression would therefore be excluded from being emancipatory. For example, Marxist-Leninism usually takes the exploitation of workers to be the general form of oppression whose abolition will ultimately liberate everyone. Or there is Daly who argues that enlightened women are good and unenlightened women and all men are bad and from the dominance of the latter over the former can be derived the problems of the world. In both these cases no distinction is recognised between an abstract, general form of oppression and the particular form that each addresses. In short, these theories take themselves to be expressing the universal nature of oppression and they would accordingly be excluded by the definition of oppression from being part of emancipatory collectives.

The second part of the definition of oppression states that emancipatory collectives are unified around a project of emancipation or an experience of oppression and so collectives that are not so unified would not be considered emancipatory collectives. For example, the collective action systems of raving and feminism can be distinguished because the first is not based on a sense of oppression but on the pursuit of a certain desubjectified state of pleasure, while the second

addresses the subjection of women by men. It is true that ravers have been involved in political conflict but that conflict has so far not been a unifying factor behind the collective actions they undertake. Instead, ravers have simply raved. [Connie, 1992] On the other hand, feminists have developed a complicated set of collective actions that are not straightforwardly unified but which do coalesce around their oppression.

The third part of the general definition of oppression provides two major grounds on which movements may be judged. This part states, first, that oppression or emancipation is formed in a non-essentialist relationship between collectives and, second, that this relationship is one in which at least one collective benefits or is benefited through a mechanism which simultaneously impoverishes at least one other collective.

Any collective based on a naturalism or essentialism, such as Daly's feminism which is based on the essential nature of men and women, would thus be excluded. In contrast to Daly, Marxist-Leninism is not necessarily based on naturalism but can claim that it is simply the universally valid analysis of a particular society, capitalism. Accordingly, only interpretations of Marxist-Leninism which transform this claim into a certainty based on the true nature of humans would be excluded by this particular criteria.

The general definition also claims that in the relationship between collectives there is a mechanism which simultaneously enriches one collective by impoverishing another. The nature of the mechanism, and thus of enrichment and impoverishment, is determined only in each particular case of oppression, as here is reached the limits of abstraction. Nonetheless, this relationship ensures that a basis for any emancipatory collective is a relationship between at least two collectives that involves exploitation, alienation, exclusion or some other oppressive relationship. If a collective is not at least partially based on such a relationship then the ontology of emancipatory collectives does not consider it emancipatory. For example, this requirement would exclude theories of difference, such as Deleuze and Guattari's, or forms of feminism based on difference, such as Butler's.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that there is a continually productive desire whose 'lines of flight' must never be blocked and Butler creates a vision of woman as the continual process of 'ripping' or the continual openness to new and different interpretations of woman. In both these cases the commitment to differentiation, as the centre of a liberatory politics, means that no opposition between collectives can be specified, as all oppositions are blocks to the continual making of the new. Neither of these theories identify an emancipatory collective

because neither identifies a relationship of oppression between two collective action systems, instead they dissolve any unity into the process of differentiation.

Another example is the dance movement of Raving because this movement seems to have no self-defined sense of itself as a collective in struggle with any other collective. The nature of raving's resistance to attempts to stop their central form of collective action, the rave-party, is emblematic of this. As police sought to prevent raves occurring ravers simply developed more elaborate means of continuing by setting up secret raves, without trying to define who or what was attempting to destroy them. Confronted with a direct battle over the existence of their collective action systems ravers simply tried to go on and spent no obvious time defining the conflict they were caught in. Raving cannot be considered an emancipatory collective because its collective action systems are not unified around the oppression or emancipation of ravers.

Consideration of raving also creates a useful distinction because while raving cannot be considered an emancipatory collective it also does not seem to be an oppressor collective. A distinction can thus be drawn between collectives which simply do not meet the criteria of emancipatory collectives and those that are positively oppressive. On the basis of the general definition of

oppression, oppressor collectives can be identified as those collectives that are more powerful in or benefit from a relationship of oppression or collectives that claim authority through a universalism or essentialism, while other non-oppressed, non-oppressor collectives simply do not meet the criteria of an emancipatory collective. What is distinctive about oppressor collectives is that they are enriched by the impoverishment of another collective or they oppress by claiming to be the universal or naturally authoritative collective.

In summary, the ontology of emancipatory collectives has several means of judging which social movements may be considered emancipatory collectives. Collectives cannot be based on universalism or any form of essentialism or be unable to see themselves as a system of collective action in struggle with at least one other collective. In a sense the third point bars a commitment to a pure politics of difference, by ensuring the presence of oppositions between collective action systems, while the previous two bar a commitment to a pure politics of value.

A New Vision of Revolutionary Being.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives drains the general struggle for liberation of all but intellectual

content. The general definition of oppression is not something that can be fought by collective action systems because it is a guide to oppression rather than the articulation of an existing oppression. Political struggle occurs in the various networks and organisations that make up the collective action systems of particular emancipatory collectives and not in one over-arching movement. In this sense the left, as a unified movement which unites all anti-oppression struggles into the one struggle, is dead because there is no longer one struggle to be fought.

The new patterns of emancipatory politics posited by the ontology of emancipatory collectives are made up of many internally pluralistic movements which have no single unifying organisation or ideology, but which are centred around a common self-defined project of emancipation or experience of oppression. It is these collective action systems which are politically primary, in the sense that they can effect fundamental social change. In the ontology 'revolutionary being' is possessed by collective action systems that are centred around a project of emancipation or an experience of oppression.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives creates a vision of political change which is no longer based on one great upheaval which transforms society. Instead, many revolutions, each of which transforms the society it

addresses, make up its vision of fundamental social change. Within the ontology there is, then, no utopia which can be ushered in by the overthrow of the capitalist state or the seizure of power by nurturant women, however there can be a transformation of the oppression of workers or the emancipation of women from male domination.

The overall argument so far is that analysis of the left's collective memory reveals the patterns of post-sixties left politics as being formed by the emergence of many different forms of liberation, which creates confusion and fragmentation in the overall vision of the left. These patterns establish the fundamental principle that there can be many, possibly incompatible, forms of liberation. A new theory of liberatory politics has then been proposed, called the ontology of emancipatory collectives, which reconstructs the nature of revolutionary being around these patterns. This ontology claims that collective action systems united around a self-defined project of emancipation are revolutionary, in the sense that these systems can fundamentally transform society by transforming their oppression. However, the ontology also claims that each revolution must be recognised as that collective's own revolution. There is no longer a universal struggle.

Two principles underly this new vision of emancipation and their analysis will complete the conceptualisation of the ontology of emancipatory collectives. First, the ontology relies on a rejection of truth in favour of many perspectives. Second, the ontology assumes that the elements that make up the networks of collective action systems exist in a particular context.

Perspectivism.

Perspectivism is formed in the shift from identifying the true nature of society's oppressive relationships to recognising that different and contradictory perspectives on oppression can co-exist. Two shifts are involved here. First, there is a change from truth to perspective and, second, from society to oppression. These will be discussed in turn.

When the left claimed that revolutionary being was possessed by a single collective this formed the basis for the concomitant assumption that this collective would reveal the single truth about oppression in society. The unity of a single overarching movement would be mirrored in the unified truth which this movement would construct. Scientific Marxism is perhaps the clearest example of this appeal to truth. For these Marxists Marx, or at least their interpretation of him, revealed the fundamental workings of society through the theory of

surplus-value and so provided the scientific basis from which the transformation of society could be conducted. One collective, the workers, possessing one truth, Marx's, were inextricably linked as they travelled the path of revolution. This is not to say that such unity of truth or collective was achieved, but that aiming for this unity formed the framework within which scientific Marxism's theories and movements operated. [Kellner, 1983] In a view that attacks truth-seeking views like scientific Marxism Friedrich Nietzsche, the father of modern perspectivism, wrote:

"It is of cardinal importance that one should abolish the *true world*. It is the greatest inspirer of doubt and devaluator in respect of the world we are: it has been our most dangerous attempt yet to assassinate life." [Nietzsche, 1967, 314]

Following Nietzsche, the claim that there is an absolute truth to anti-oppression politics can be attacked because it provides a basis from which to assassinate the particular truths engendered by emancipatory collectives. For example, the certainty of scientific Marxism that production determines the nature of both society and exploitation makes the truths of feminism at best peripheral issues and at worst lies which misdirect true revolutionaries from the path of change.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives accordingly discards the search for the overall and complete truth of social transformation in favour of the coexistence of

many true perspectives on transformation. This follows from the ontology's basic principle that many different forms of emancipation co-exist. The ontology does not assume there is an objective reality which determines oppression in society but instead assumes there will be articulations of particular oppressions.

If emancipatory collectives each reveal a perspective it must be asked what these perspectives view. In the left the various views that aimed for truth were views of society. For example, Marxism stems from the analysis people producing in society and so Marxism primarily addresses society's productive forces. Left politics has consequently been inscribed within a unified framework in which the assumption of a single revolutionary collective is articulated, first, as has just been discussed, toward the belief in an absolute truth of revolution and, second, toward the assumption that a single society corresponds to this truth. In contrast, the ontology of emancipatory collectives claims that emancipatory collectives self-define their project of emancipation or their experience of oppression and not the real nature of a society independent of their self-definitions. The ontology of emancipatory collectives is thus made up of perspectives on oppression not the truth of society.¹

1 This does not mean that emancipatory collectives cannot develop theories of society. All that is required by the ontology is that a social theory be based in a movement's particular definition of oppression. For example, black

Accordingly, the hypothesis that 'society' is a unified and objective reality which exists independent of attempts to study it, does not underly the ontology of emancipatory collectives. Rather, many different understandings of society, each based on a perspective on oppression, can be articulated by emancipatory collectives. It is not that the ontology conclusively demonstrates that an independent and unified real society does not exist. Instead, it shows that each emancipatory view of society is developed from a particular perspective and so has no basis from which to claim that it is a universally valid view of society. Emancipatory movements are unified as emancipatory because they all attack oppression and not because they 'see' the same society as each other or even because, whether they know it or not, they all exist in the same society.

However, the irrelevance of an independently real society might lead to the accusation of idealism, because there will be no external reality against which views can be measured and corrected. Instead, whatever a collective self-defines as existing may be said to exist and, in this way, collectives will be able to invent any society

movements develop a theory of society from their perspective of the oppression white visits on black. Similarly, the society feminism sees is based on the division between men and women in which men benefit. In both cases a complete theory of society can be created, but only from each perspective. The fundamental orientation of each movement provides the 'blinkers' through which that movement can construct its view of all aspects of society.

they wish, with no regard to material constraints. This second objection could be answered by noting that bootstrapping is a process which creates bank-like objectivity but it will be useful in this context to answer it by examining the second principle which underlies the ontology of emancipatory collectives, contextualism.

Contextualism.

To show that idealism does not necessarily follow from the ontology of emancipatory collectives a distinction can be drawn between techniques that are used to establish a connection between theories and reality and the reality itself. It can then be noted that it is possible for various techniques which measure certain aspects of reality to continue to do so without it ever also being assumed that the results of these techniques will amount to an absolutely true theory of society. Rather, each technique can be viewed as a particular measure of or connection to one aspect of material reality. In this way particular empirical techniques can be part of a collective's process of self-definition without it also being assumed that an objective picture of one society across all collectives will be the result of these techniques.

However, using empirical techniques in this way does make some assumptions about the 'reality' that these techniques examine. What the ontology of emancipatory collectives assumes is not that these techniques uncover part of a pre-existing whole, like digging a statue out of the sand, but that all the various factors that make up a movement's collective action systems exist in a particular context to which empirical techniques can provide a connection.² The claim that the parts of systems of collective action exist in a social context, echoes Marx's belief that people cannot be conceived of outside of society. Marx wrote:

"Production by an isolated individual outside society...is as much an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other." [Marx, 1939, 84]

Marx then went on from this basic principle to develop his particular theory of the social context, which

2 A possible means of demonstrating the existence of this context was provided when Lyotard's argument concerning Faurisson's claim that the gas ovens of Auschwitz did not exist was examined. It was noted that Lyotard's interpretation of the principle 'nothing is simpler than something' is idealist but must itself rely on a preexisting context which provides a referent which will give sense to the word 'nothing'. Lyotard's idealism was therefore shown to be buttressed by a necessary contextualism, otherwise he would have had to have given explicit consideration to the nature of 'nothing' and so make clear his own idealist assumptions. In general it might thus be claimed that nothing relevant exists outside of a context because there is no means of grasping or understanding something that is contextless. The example of Lyotard demonstrates that even 'nothing' has a context.

concentrated on societies' particular arrangements of productive forces but, in the above quote, Marx noted two possible aspects of an individual's context, language and production, and it has already been argued that within the ontology of emancipatory collectives there will be more orientations on society and oppression than just Marx's. Contextualism can accordingly be developed as a generalisation of Marx's claim that to think that a single individual could develop production processes or language is absurd. This generalisation can be conducted in relation to, first, what Marx thought is in or outside of production and, second, what production is itself thought to be.

Marx assumed that it was individuals who were contextualised, that is Marx placed individuals in the social context of production. However, unified individual subjects cannot be assumed within the ontology of emancipatory collectives because individuals may have contradictory places in several collectives. For example, an individual black man may be an oppressor in relation to the feminist movement, oppressed in relation to the black liberation movement and either oppressed or oppressor in relation to the workers' movement. In each of these three movements, because he will be viewed and self-defined from that movement, a black man may be three different subjects. What is important is that different individual subjectivities can relate to different

oppressions and so it should not be assumed that individuals are unified and complete subjects under one relationship of oppression.

Instead of individuals the ontology of emancipatory collectives assumes that the range of events, texts, subjects and organisations that make up the elements of a collective action system are in a social context. Definitions of these elements will be created in any particular case by a collective's development of its self-definition. One example of this would be the way the publication of some of Marx's texts, notably the Grundrisse, long after both his death and the formation of a political movement based on Marxism has altered Marxist theories of economic oppression and supported a questioning of Marxist-Leninist interpretations, which had themselves been formed without knowledge of these 'new' texts. Marx's new texts became elements in Marxism's collective actions systems and so were situated in and helped to develop the context of Marxism. [Corrigan et.al., 1978, 28: Negri, 1978]

A second example can be found in Foucault and Derrida's disagreement over Foucault's interpretation, in his book Madness and Civilisation, of Descartes. Derrida rejected Foucault's claim that Descartes excluded madness from the test of universal doubt and argued that rather than creating a division between madness and reason Descartes

merely ignored madness. Foucault then rejected Derrida's claim on the basis of the context Descartes lived in which, according to Foucault, clearly meant that Descartes' words must be interpreted as excluding madness from reason. For example, Foucault pointed out the juridical and medical terms for madness that Descartes used in order to assert that his interpretation is confirmed by Descartes' social context. [Foucault, 1971a, 16-17; Derrida, 1963; Eribon, 1992, 119-122]

Foucault then argued that Derrida's mistake stemmed from his allegiance to a system in which 'discursive practices' are reduced to 'textual traces'. According to Foucault, Derrida is guilty of thinking that there is "nothing outside of the text". [Foucault, 1971a, 27] In order to place a text in its context Foucault wishes to make interpretations which take account of the 'discursive practices' that are at play around a text. For Foucault a context is not just textual but involves other historical techniques which can develop a materially based theory of a social context. [Derrida, 1963; Foucault, 1965; Foucault, 1971a; Foucault, 1971b]

In summary, the ontology of emancipatory collectives claims that many elements other than individuals can be contextualised. As seen in the examples of Marxism and Foucault's dispute with Derrida many elements are relevant to the context of an emancipatory collective,

including exhumed draft manuscripts and medical terminology. Marx is thus broadened by noting there are more elements to collective action systems than just individuals. Marx can be broadened in a second way by arguing that the context involves all the relations that flow around a particular oppression and not just the relations that develop around societies' production processes.

In a general sense, the context of an emancipatory collective can be articulated by a collective through analysis of the inter-relations between the various elements that make up the collective action systems of an emancipatory collective. That is, if the elements that are contextualised are events, texts, organisations and so on, then the context in which they occur can be grasped by articulating the patterns of relations between such elements. As a collective action system bootstraps into being an emancipatory collective through a self-definition of oppression, patterns of relations will develop which give particular senses to the elements of that collective action system. It can accordingly be claimed that the context for the elements of collective action systems emerges as self-definitions unify collective actions into emancipatory movements. The ontology of emancipatory collectives thus assumes that there are patterned relations between the elements of an emancipatory movement's collective action systems, the

articulation of which outlines a context for these systems.

An example of a context can be found in the debate over Sado-Masochism, SM, in the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. In this conflict various elements were put into play, such as texts produced by different parties, references to outside theories and women and men who came from inside and outside the Centre both for meetings and informal contacts. Three patterns of relations among these elements can be discerned in Ardill and O'Sullivan's account of this conflict. First, there were those relations which developed around the attempt to exclude SM from the Centre because SM was considered a personification of male brutality. Second, there were those relations which developed among women who felt uneasy with SM, because of its connotations of male violence, but were prepared to give it a place in the Centre. Last, there were those relations which promoted SM as creating new forms of liberation for lesbians. All three patterns agreed that the social context for lesbians was one of oppression both as women and homosexuals but they also disputed the nature of lesbians' oppression.

The events, texts and organisations that came into being around this debate accordingly developed their meaning from this context. For example, the middle group of

women, who tolerated SM, spent time developing a dress-code for the Centre as a compromise proposal. This code defined what was and was not acceptable in the Centre on such issues as wearing Nazi insignia. The dress-code, as an element in diverse collective action systems, gains its sense from its place as a compromise articulated against the extremes of a total rejection of SM or 'anything goes' when defining the oppression of lesbians and is therefore set in a context made of the patterns of relations around this conflict. This also means that the dress code might appear senseless if transferred to a different context, for example the Socialist-Feminist conferences of the nineteen seventies. [Ardill and O'Sullivan, 1986]

In summary, contextualism is the principle that all the various elements that make up the collective action systems of emancipatory collectives exist in patterned relations between these elements and various empirical techniques, from consciousness-raising to questionnaires, can be applied to discovering and elaborating this context. While this does not provide a transparent picture of an objective and independent world which could limit, or even assassinate, movements it does give meaning to the belief that emancipatory collectives exist in social contexts.

Through a Looking Glass.

The belief in a fundamental transformation of society is retained from the left by the ontology of emancipatory collectives, yet the nature of such a transformation is itself transformed because no universal struggle and no one society can be conceived by the ontology. Instead particular perspectives each give their own form of revolution. The ontology also retains the left's concern for oppressions that involve masses of people but provides these with a totally different framework, within which each oppression is the site of revolutionary struggle rather than each struggle being part of the revolution. Old, familiar elements of the left remain in the ontology of emancipatory collectives but, having passed through a looking glass created by the emergence of many anti-oppression movements and theories of difference, they are also reconceptualised.

Fundamentally, the ontology of emancipatory collectives claims that primacy in liberation struggles should be conferred on emancipatory movements that are each centered on their own vision of revolutionary change.

The change from one to many revolutions moves the ontology of emancipatory collectives past the left's collective memory and provides the basis for a new memory. This memory is opened by claiming that the eruption of many anti-oppression movements inaugurates a

reversal from the primacy of a general overall struggle to the primacy of particular struggles. This reversal has also been recognised by some. For example, Mhairi Stewart, chairperson of the successor to the Communist Party of Great Britain called the Democratic Left, said in 1992:

"Class isn't central any more. People are coming in from other directions now- the women's movement, the Greens, etc. Politics has got to be relevant to people or it's just not worth it." [Quoted in Smith, 1992]

Politics relevant to people, created by people through their own definitions of oppression or emancipation are at the heart of the ontology of emancipatory collectives. Born from the left, but also against it, the politics of emancipatory collectives alters and incorporates the left's collective memory. A reversal from the belief that society will be transformed by a universal struggle to the belief that many transformations of oppression are necessary, forms the basis of a renewed liberatory vision.

Chapter 11: To Think About Hope.

Hegemony and New Times.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives is a theory of political action and is not, in any conventional sense, a social theory. The ontology does not develop a concrete vision of a new liberated society, but creates an understanding of the forces behind emancipatory politics. It does not set out a world that might be, neither does it capture the world that is. The ontology does not assume there can be a society without oppression nor does it offer the inevitability of emancipatory success, it is a theory for fighting oppression and not a blueprint for utopia. The ontology is about liberation without ever embodying this hope, because the ontology does not direct groups of people in the character of their hope. Instead of categorising liberation the ontology of emancipatory collectives is a means of thinking about liberatory forces.

In conclusion it will be useful to briefly examine three other attempts to address the problems of the left. The ontology of emancipatory collectives does not stand alone but attempts to be part of a broad renewal of liberatory politics.

In nineteen eighty-eight the magazine Marxism Today published a special edition based on the premise that "We need new politics for the new times." [Manifesto for New Times, 448] The politics of 'New Times' then developed around the belief that capitalism was undergoing a transformation as profound as the transition from entrepreneurial to advanced capitalism but not as profound as the change from feudalism to capitalism. That is, New Times claimed that a qualitative change was occurring within capitalism which would, however, not move society beyond the basic structure of capitalism. The change itself involves a shift from Fordist to post-Fordist production techniques combined with other changes such as the decline of manual workers as a proportion of the workforce, the rise of information based industries and the implications of postmodernism for culture. Within this framework New Times became an ongoing project which tried to explore possibilities for the left rather than develop a finalised programme. [Hall, 1989, 118-119: Hall and Jacques, 1989a, 12]

New Times argued that the crisis of the left was chiefly caused by the left's failure to grasp the new society that was coming into existence. In their introduction to the collection of New Times articles Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques compared the consequent fragmentation of liberatory politics with the need for a single movement:

"Another feature of New Times is the proliferation of sites of antagonism and resistance, and the appearance of new subjects, new social movements, new collective identities- an enlarged sphere for the operation of politics. But these are not easy to organise into any single and cohesive collective political will." [Hall and Jacques, 1989a, 17]

The comparison of the single struggle that has been socialism with the fractured nature of the left in the eighties was also given by Hall in the original New Times edition of Marxism Today, when he called for a "'socialism' committed to, rather than scared of, diversity and difference." [Hall, 1988, 28]

New Times brought these two claims, that a new age of capitalism has dawned and that the left is fragmented, together and argued that the left needed to reconstitute itself as a political movement by taking stock of the new epoch of capitalism. An understanding of this new capitalism would then help draw all the disparate strands of eighties radicalism together into a coherent socialist movement.

New Times was always a 'work in progress' that did not aim for a finalised state and can, perhaps, best be thought of as the general strategy adopted by some writers, grouped around Marxism Today, to address the crisis of the left. This strategy also differs from the ontology of emancipatory collectives, which might regard New Times as both working on similar problems, raising as it does questions concerning the left's crisis, while

also addressing issues in different way. The chief difference is that New Times creates a new vision of a new society which will, in turn, guide the left to its reconstitution as an innovative political force, whereas the ontology of emancipatory collectives examines the basis on which the left could construct a vision of society. While working on similar problems the two attempts thus approach the renewal of the left at different levels.

A second attempt to aid the reconstruction of the left can be found in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's book Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. This work is closer than New Times to the answers produced by the ontology of emancipatory collectives and also deserves a brief examination.

Like New Times and the ontology of emancipatory collectives Laclau and Mouffe recognise that the left's overall vision has broken down. To explore ideas of political change, in what they call the post-Marxist world, they situate themselves within the Marxist tradition in order to think their way past it, which they do by reconsidering Gramsci's concept of hegemony.
[Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, 1-5]

Laclau and Mouffe's argument from this starting point is complex and not easily summarised, so the following short

exposition will only bring out their central point. Essentially, they argue that hegemony should be understood as a process by which different social forces are articulated into political antagonisms and struggles. They write:

"Hegemony is, quite simply, a political *type of relation, a form*, if one so wishes, of politics; but not a determinable location within the topography of the social." [Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, 139]

Hegemony refers to the processes by which social antagonisms are developed into political struggles in which some forces seek dominance over all aspects of society. No particular social antagonism is assumed to be central to society, rather a process by which antagonisms are developed is identified. From this core idea Laclau and Mouffe develop a series of claims that are similar to the ontology of emancipatory collectives. For example, they argue that the possibility of a single, unified discourse for the left has been erased in favour of a plurality of struggles. [Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, 191]

Other similarities between Laclau and Mouffe's concept of hegemony and the ontology of emancipatory collectives exist, however there is also a key difference. Laclau and Mouffe fail to address how liberatory movements develop and what may give them a unifying core. Consequently, their political vision seems to consist of various different political articulations, but has no means of

understanding why certain articulations form a political movement. The ontology of emancipatory collectives, as has been argued, can do this and so provides some political content on a point Laclau and Mouffe where indeterminate, that is in relation to what can be an agent of political change. Laclau and Mouffe reject, as does the ontology, the attempt to predetermine the nature of a subject that is capable of transforming society, but they also fail to develop an alternative understanding of the source of social transformation whereas, in its conception of emancipatory collectives, the ontology proposes such an alternative. Laclau and Mouffe reject identifying a privileged agent of revolutionary change but the ontology of emancipatory collectives has tried to reinvent an understanding of revolution and revolutionaries. [Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, 178-179: Laclau, 1991]

There are other attempts to address the crisis of the left, such as Guattari and Negri's nineteen eighty-five manifesto for a renewed communism or Stuart Hall's sustained analysis of the Thatcher Government and its opposition. Unfortunately this thesis does not have enough space to survey all these attempts. However, it is clear that the ontology of emancipatory collectives seeks a place in this tradition of a renewal that will be effected by action at many levels of theory and practice. The contribution of this thesis makes its place at a

level of philosophical abstraction which is needed to directly address the overall political vision of the left. [Guattari and Negri, 1985: Hall, 1988: Hall, 1992]

Changes to the left, as advocated by the ontology of emancipatory collectives and others in the developing tradition of left renewal, will inevitably confront a nostalgia for the certainties that have passed and the political actions that are familiar. The appeal, for example, of humanism or of theories that assert a complete view of a social totality, will not simply be overcome by the ontology because the left has a long and powerful history whose social theories and prescriptions for action will not easily be discarded. However, the ontology of emancipatory collectives also confronts this nostalgia by developing itself from the left's history, albeit a hypothesised and schematised version of that history. Analysis of this memory indicated problems created by the left's past and so why nostalgia should not restrain the creation of a new political vision for the left. Nostalgia can be a powerful force, but in a generally recognised crisis of the left its influence cannot be paramount.

In Conclusion.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives developed from a hypothesised collective memory of the left. This memory

turned on the dissolution of a Marxist hegemony over liberatory politics caused by the emergence, since the sixties, of many different, non-class based anti-oppression movements. The dislocation of the unity Marxism gave to the left into many anti-oppression movements constituted this thesis's departure point.

Marxism was then considered as an example in relation to the question, what role can a political movement based on unified values play in the context of the proliferation of anti-oppression movements ? To answer this question the possibility that Marxism might itself be a partial theory that dealt only with economic oppression and not a universal theory covering all aspects of all oppressions, was established. The conclusion was then drawn that a political movement based on unified values must oppress some groups by excluding them from its vision of social change. Values establish boundaries which exclude other values from the definition of what is and is not legitimately political. This claim was called the logic of exclusion and inclusion.

The failure of unified values as a basis for the left was thus established at a general level. This failure implied that the left might be based on difference, because if the left could affirm all the different forms of liberatory movements then it would not itself be oppressing through exclusion. To explore the nature of a

difference based politics Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desire as the process of differentiation and Lyotard's philosophy of phrases were investigated. Criticism of both Deleuze and Guattari and Lyotard showed how making the process of differentiation the center of a politics leads to that politics becoming indifferent to anything but the creation of difference. Paradoxically, difference led to indifference. Difference thus failed as a possible basis for a renewed left because a politics based on difference is unable to encompass the particular values that anti-oppression movements have developed.

At this stage investigation of the left's collective memory had indicated two paths, value and difference, both of which were found wanting. However, it was also noticed that value implied difference as the means of answering its problems and difference implied value as the answer to its problems. Consequently, the existence of a single ongoing debate between difference and value, and not a progression from one to the other, was hypothesised and examined. The difference/value debate was then defined as the ability of difference and value to both provide a critique of each other and to offer an answer to each others' problems, thereby creating a circularity as difference and value constantly criticise each other and repeatedly offer a means of answering these criticisms. This circularity was characterised as paralysed motion. In order to progress beyond this debate

the underlying structure of the difference/value debate was examined.

The assumptions that revolution will be made by constituting a collective and that this collective is singular were then argued to be underpinning the difference/value debate, because these assumptions provide difference and value based movements with a common goal over which they struggle. Consequently, it was argued that positing many forms of revolution, rather than one revolutionary collective, can move liberatory politics beyond the difference/value debate. A political ontology was accordingly developed and was called the ontology of emancipatory collectives.

Emancipatory collectives were defined as agglomerations of theories, events, individuals and organisations which do not necessarily have a central hierarchy or organisation but which are collective action systems unified around a common project of emancipation or experience of oppression. Definitions of oppression and emancipation, as a collective's unifying core, are developed through the self-definitions of members of a collective which can grow into a system with bank-like objectivity. An emancipatory collective 'bootstraps' into existence its own unifying core and establishes it as an objective entity.

Communication between emancipatory collectives was then theorised as being marked by this process of unification through self-definition. As collectives must view other collectives from the basis of their own unity collectives will relate to each other in a framework made up of the two axes of misunderstanding, by viewing a collective not through the viewed collective's self-definitions, or assimilation, by merging collectives' self-definitions. It is not that emancipatory collectives cannot see each other or relate to each other, but that these inter-relations are influenced by the axes of misunderstanding and assimilation.

The overall vision of politics created by the ontology of emancipatory collectives is based on these theories and it claims that the ability to transform societies resides in many self-defined and pluralistic anti-oppression collectives and not in one all-encompassing and unified movement. The overall vision of the ontology moves the left from the reality of society to experiences of oppression and emancipation.

In the past, the left has continually called for reality. At the height of the events of May nineteen sixty-eight in France the left used the slogan 'I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires', but since the sixties reality has betrayed the left, not by proving the left wrong but by being elusive. What

reality can the left now rely on ? The feminist ? The libertarian socialist ? The animal liberationist ? Worse, what combination of these realities, because perhaps all have some validity, can the left build its desires on ? What permutation is correct ? The left has been betrayed by a reality that has removed its stability by multiplying under its very gaze. The idea of reality has betrayed the left, even as there is political conflict in reality.

The ontology of emancipatory collectives can move the left beyond reality, not to dissolve material constraints on thought and action but because oppression and emancipation can be a new basis for revolutionary political movements. This new left can move beyond the slogans of nineteen sixty-eight by taking its desires for possibilities, because emancipatory collectives believe in the possibility of their desires.

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